Plato and the Power of Images

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Plato and the Power of Images

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Introduction: The Power—and the Problems—of Plato's Images

Pierre Destrée and Radcliffe G. Edmonds III

Plato is well known both for the harsh condemnations of images and image-making poets that appear in his dialogues and for the vivid and intense imagery that he himself uses in his matchless prose. How then does Plato handle the power of images? The uses of imagery might be imagined to include allegories, similes, metaphors, analogies, models, and even vivid writing styles that capture characters in dialogue—perhaps even ideas of images and image-making not directly connected with writing, for the question of why Plato uses vivid images in his writings is obviously linked to how he understands images and the way the mind handles them.

In the analysis of all of these, the focus is the way in which Plato moves beyond abstract philosophical reasoning to engage with the poetic and literary, whether in his devastating critiques of the abuses of the power of poetry and poetic devices or in his superb and subtle uses of those same powerful arts and devices. While Plato is famous—or infamous—for his banning of Homer and the poets from the ideal city of the *Republic* because of the corrupting power of poetry, Plato is also famous—or infamous—for the powerful myths and images he employs, not just in the *Republic* but elsewhere throughout his dialogues. The metaphor of the Ship of State, the tripartite description of the soul, the allegory of the Cave, the model of the divided line, are all memorable images from that dialogue, not to mention the vivid scenes from the concluding Myth of Er, the towering vault of heaven, the sirens singing on their revolving cosmic spheres, the souls of evil-doers being dragged back to torment, like wool being carded over thorns, or the lottery of souls where the heroes of myth choose their new incarnations.

Just as, in the *Phaedo*, the image of Simmias evokes the memory image of Cebes, so too the images of the *Republic* recall to us Plato's other fantastic images, the spherical double men of Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium*, the whip-scars on the naked soul of the Great King in the underworld in the *Gorgias*, Socrates' self-description as the gadfly on the rump of the somnolent Athenian public in the *Apology*, the poignant song of the dying swan in the *Phaedo*, the great chariot race around the vault of the heavens of the soul chariots in the *Phaedrus* and the terrible crashes that lead to the soul's incarnation.

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These vivid and powerful images that Plato employs raise a variety of questions: How does the power of these images fit with the critiques that Plato raises against other use of images in these and other dialogues? Why should Plato employ a vivid sense image like, e.g., the winged chariot of the soul, to talk about something that is not perceptible to the senses? What makes some images more powerful than others? Why might an image of a soul chariot that inaccurately represents the idea (one that, e.g., has four horses instead of two) nevertheless be more powerfully memorable than a more accurate representation that is less striking in other respects? How does Plato reconcile the gap between the image's appearance and the truth it signifies? Is the relation of the image to that which it represents some kind of mimesis, reflection or refraction or inversion or perhaps even perspectival distortion? What is the role of color, shape, size, even beauty? How does this power of image work for Plato in any case?

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The essays in this volume represent an attempt to grapple with questions like these, even if the sheer quantity and quality of Plato's images make a comprehensive treatment beyond the scope of this or any volume. This volume continues the lines of investigation begun in two prior volumes, *Plato and the Poets* (edited by Pierre Destrée and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann) and *Plato and Myth* (edited by Catherine Collobert, Pierre Destrée, and Francisco Gonzalez), published in this same *Mnemosyne* series.

The volume comprises twelve chapters which offer various perspectives on the ways Plato has used images, and the ways we could, or should, understand their status as images. Although Plato's *Republic* may contain some of the most famous of Plato's images, as well as his most famous critique, the volume starts examining images in Plato by analyzing the image of Plato's Socrates himself, notably in the speech of Alcibiades in the *Symposium*, where Alcibiades explicitly says that he will offer his encomium of Erôs as a praise of Socrates "by means of images" (215a).

In "Alcibiades' Eikôn of Socrates and the Platonic Text (*Symp*. 215a–222d)," Andrew Ford proposes a new and challenging reading of one of the most memorable images in Plato, Alcibiades' extended comparison (*eikôn*) between Socrates and the popular carved statuettes of Sileni. Reading the passage as a virtuoso example of the sympotic game of "drawing similes" (*eikones legein*), Ford suggests that Plato exploits the *eikôn* as a way of praising his own writing: just as such objects could be opened up to reveal little figurines of gods (*agalmata theôn*) within, Plato's text is presented as a cunning kind of verbal

icon that has a precious hidden meaning for those able to penetrate its surface sense. Ford's essay also raises the questions of why Plato resorts to such similitudes and why, at least in discussing some issues, the language of the Platonic text can only be *like* what it represents.

Reading the same speech from quite a different perspective, Elizabeth Belfiore, in "The Image of Achilles in Plato's *Symposium*," shows that some aspects of the imagery of Plato's *Symposium* can help us to achieve a better understanding of Plato's use of heroic figures. Plato must resort to imagery because of Socrates' strangeness: "With a man such as Achilles was," says Alcibiades, "one might compare Brasidas, and others, and with such a man as Pericles one might compare Nestor and Antenor," but Socrates can be compared with no other human, ancient or modern (221c–d). Thus, Alcibiades says that Socrates is *not* the image of anyone else, and, in particular, that he is *not* the image of Achilles, first on this list of heroic figures. Comparison of significant words and actions of Socrates in the *Symposium* with those of Achilles in the *Iliad* reveal that Socrates is indeed *not* an image of Achilles in the sense of a likeness. He is, on the contrary, an Achilles in reverse, whose words and deeds are just the opposite of those of Achilles. That is, he is a mirror-image of Achilles, in the sense of an image that is the reverse of the original.

After these rather different openings into our theme, Francisco Gonzalez, in "The Power and Ambivalence of a Beautiful Image in Plato and the Poets," embarks upon the larger question of the status of images in Plato's dialogues, pointing out that Plato's critique of the poets for their use of images in no way implies that philosophy can dispense with images. The starting point of any discussion of the topic must be the fact that Plato's relation to images, and thus also to the poets in whom he sees the masters of images, is deeply ambivalent. What Gonzalez shows is that this ambivalence is rooted in the ambivalence that characterizes images themselves on Plato's account, an ambivalence that especially comes to the fore in the *beautiful* image. Such an image is ambivalent in that by its very nature it both produces satisfaction with itself, is desirable in itself, and points beyond itself, leaving one unsatisfied. Here again, the *Symposium* is one important place to start, in particular the contest between Agathon and Socrates. What we learn from this contest is that the beautiful image can be more than an image only when it ceases to satisfy. In the end it is an emphasis on the 'erotic' character of images, and thus on their ambivalence between possessing and lacking that of which they are the images, that distinguishes the philosopher from the poet.

The status of images is further explored from the 'erotic' perspective by Radcliffe G. Edmonds III ("Putting him on a pedestal: (Re)collection and the use of images in Plato's *Phaedrus*"). In the *Phaedrus* Plato plays with the problematic

status of images, employing some of his most vivid and memorable images to illustrate how images may be used philosophically in the processes of *sunagôgê* and *anamnêsis*. The beautiful beloved serves as an image of the divine reality, and the lover sets up, adorns, and worships this icon as if it were the god itself, for it both reminds him of his prenatal glimpse of the hyperouranian realm and leads his soul back toward that divine reality. Plato describes the lover's treatment of the beloved as an image of the divine in terms similar to those of the true rhetorician's construction of a speech that leads the soul of the hearer toward truth. The lover actively tends to this divine image, fashioning it in the likeness of the god he recollects following in the path toward the hyperouranian realm, while Socrates claims that, when he finds someone who can employ philosophical collection and division, he will follow in that man's tracks as if he were a god. Both the worship paid to the beloved icon and good speeches employ images and mnemonic associations to lead the follower, step by step, toward the truth. While Phaedrus fixes his desire upon the images, both the beloved boy and the speeches, Socrates uses these images as signs on his philosophic path, reminders of whence he has come and whither he is going.

Christopher Moore approaches the problem of mistaking the image for the reality from a different angle, exploring how creating images of the self can actively lead to the likening of the self to that image. In "The Images of Knowing Oneself," images are linked to the famous theme of self-knowledge; indeed, in all the dialogues where such a theme comes up, Socrates urges practically all his interlocutors onto self-knowledge, and he does so through images. Some are images suggesting what to do; others suggest how to be. The first kind depicts people doing analogous activities: the mirror-gazer (*Alc.*), the myth-rectifier (*Phdr.*), the riddle-solver (*Apol.*), the comic butt (*Phlb.*), the self-diagnostician (*Chrm.*). The second kind provides a form, such as Typhon (*Phdr.*) or Prometheus (*Prot.*), the meditation on which conduces to self-knowledge. Plato has Socrates deploy these images because knowing oneself means more than simply cataloguing one's beliefs or accepting one's (im)mortality. Self-knowledge assumes and ratifies a dynamic picture of what it is to be human, as, e.g., active, transformable, and ideally rational. Urging someone to know himself thus involves bringing him to accept such a picture of himself.

And what about the problem of truth and falsehood of images—which include the themes of perspectivism, misappearance, and inaccurate representation? Gerd van Riel offers yet another context for the analysis of images, that of Plato's theology in "Perspectivism in Plato's Views of the Gods." In the *Sophist*, Plato clearly prefers the image that accurately reproduces the proportions of the model (*eikastikê technê*), over the "perspectival" image (*phantastikê technê*), which—though more artistic—falls short in truth-value, and this rejection of

perspectivism, van Riel argues, underlies Plato's theology. Contrary to what recent interpreters have held, Plato's theology is not about introducing a monistic system headed by a thinking (and hence, comprehensible) Nous. Rather, Plato's view of the gods is based on accepting human beings' fundamental incapacity to grasp the nature of the gods and the necessity, therefore, for them to represent and understand the gods through images—be they pictures, statues, or mythic tales—even if these can never accurately depict them.

Our next six chapters are primarily devoted to the *Republic* which is, paradoxically enough, the dialogue where Plato both criticizes the poets the most harshly, and uses images—similes, metaphors, analogies and myths—the most extensively. If these poetic images provide compelling and effective methods of inquiry, why is the so-called allegory of the cave, perhaps the most famous image created by Plato, so particularly compelling? In the "The Power of Plato's Cave," Grace Ledbetter offers a fresh way to answer this question by looking closely at the *way* that Plato has Socrates present the image. The Cave could have been told in many different ways, and not all of them would have been as powerful as the version Plato offers. Plato has crafted Socrates' narrative in particular ways—for example, so that the narrative does not simply describe, but asks Glaucon to draw inferences from the material. Ledbetter argues that the "telling" of the Cave itself performs a rhetorical ascent out of the cave. The Cave narrative compels by giving its audience an experience analogous to the very thing it describes.

In the *Republic*, this active effect of images is of crucial importance in the political realm *stricto sensu*, as well as in Plato's descriptions of the soul. In "Political Images of the Soul," Olivier Renaut examines the use of images which compare the soul to a city; he argues that political images of the soul are a means for going beyond a mere isomorphism between psychology and politics; they explain how the two fields interact, so that politics can act upon the soul of the individual. If the city-soul analogy, strictly understood, fails in explaining the valid relations of inclusion between individuals and the city they belong to, the political metaphors are powerful devices for making the rule of law a reality in the city. Transferring the power of reason to the power of law is a task that political metaphors of the soul seem to fulfill for an audience of citizens in the Platonic city.

In "The Ship of State and the Subordination of Socrates," Alex G. Long considers what Socrates' use of images shows about the relationship between him and the philosopher-guards of the ideal city. Sometimes, such as when Socrates employs an image in order represent the Form of the Good, the use of an image appears to shows Socrates at a lower level of understanding, lacking full knowledge of Forms, but his use of images should not always be connected with

his knowledge of Forms. When he compares the city to a ship, he is not trying to understand a Form; rather, he is trying to explain why philosophers are not respected, despite their possession of true political expertise. An image is chosen in order to make the combination of expertise and disrespect seem unsurprising, not because Socrates lacks full knowledge of the relevant subjects. Against the assumption that the only contrast between Socrates and the philosopher-guards is an epistemic contrast, Long also argues that Socrates and the guards have different political tasks in the ideal city, and in several passages, including the Ship of State, it is the nature of Socrates' political role that explains why he behaves differently from a philosopher-guard. Unlike Socrates, actual philosopher-guards do not need to devise ways of persuading others about the desirability of rule by philosophers, and moreover the guards would not have been trained for this task by their philosophical education.

In contrast to the Cave or the Ship of State, the hypothetical goat-stag is one of the less well-known images from the *Republic*, but Kathryn Morgan ("Plato's Goat-Stag and the Uses of Comparison") shows how this mysterious goat-stag serves as a programmatic introduction to Socrates' multiple images in Book 6 of the fate of philosophy and the philosopher in the contemporary city. Whereas most scholarly treatments have interpreted the goat-stag in terms of Plato's complex images of the soul, she argues that it is best seen as a reflection of the particular nature of the philosopher king. The easiest way for an ideal state to be established would be to establish as rulers people who combine the traits of political experience and philosophical expertise. There is, however, considerable doubt among Socrates' interlocutors whether this is a viable hybrid, and so Socrates pauses to create a second-order image that focuses on the problematics of unnatural combinations. Prior and subsequent references to this fabulous animal in Aristophanes and Aristotelian tradition show that the goat-stag becomes emblematic of the difficulties of complex entities that have no real-world referent.

Returning to the problematic allure of images, Penelope Murray ("Poetry and the Image of the Tyrant in Plato's *Republic*") analyzes the paradoxical use of images from the perspective of poetry and poetic images in that dialogue. Towards the end of the discussion of poetry in *Republic* X Plato describes poetry as an *erôs*, a passion from which all right thinking people should tear themselves away, like lovers who realise their passion is doing them no good. Mimetic art as a whole had earlier been figured as a hetaira who consorts with an inferior part of the soul to bring forth base offspring, and now poetry herself is envisaged as a dangerously seductive female whose charms must be resisted at all costs. This *erôs*, which has been engendered since childhood by education, *paideia*, has its analogue in the master-passion which takes control

of the tyrant's soul at 572e–575a8, while the figure of *erôs tyrannos* is itself a theatrical image (cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 538). Murray looks at how poetry, tyranny and desire are linked through a network of imagery and verbal echoes which reinforce the argument for banishing poetry, focusing on the poetic qualities of Plato's writing and his use of figurative language to generate meaning through associations that are not spelled out explicitly, but which are nevertheless there for the reader to interpret.

While readers usually take images to illustrate how souls are to be conceived, in the final essay of the volume, Douglas Cairns ("The Tripartite Soul as Metaphor") explores the rather different idea that the souls themselves are metaphors in the tripartite model of the soul as deployed in the account of the deviant personality types in *Republic* 8 and 9. The levels of the hierarchy and the stages of degeneration from the ideal make frequent use of personification. Agency, however, is not attributed only to the *eidê* of the *psuchê*, but also to the individual and to his desires. Interaction takes place between the individual and the *eidê* of his *psuchê*, but also between the individual and his desires, as well as between one desire and another and between the various *eidê* of the *psuchê*. There is, moreover, interaction not just between one individual and another, but also between one individual and various personified elements of another's personality. Since personification characterizes the model at all levels, it makes no sense to ask what the *epithumêtikon* (for example) can 'really' do; it is only in so far as it is personified that it can 'do' anything. The tenor of the metaphor is not some non-metaphorical or less metaphorical version of the tripartite soul, but simply the person, and the agency of persons remains Plato's central focus throughout the discussion, both as the phenomenon that the model of the tripartite soul is designed to elucidate and as the source domain for many of the metaphors that structure that model. It is the fact that personal agency structures both the vehicle and the tenor of the metaphor that gives rise to the frequent intrusion of the *explanandum* (the behaviour of whole persons) in the *explanans* (the model of the tripartite *psuchê*). This phenomenon is itself a further sign that Plato has no intention of using his model to dispense with the notion of persons as agents.

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Two themes thus recur throughout the collection, the problem of how an image resembles what it represents and the problem of how to avoid mistaking that image for what it represents. Through their resemblance to true reality, images have the power to move their viewers to action and to change themselves, but because of their distance from true reality, that power always remains

problematic. This ambivalence recurs in treatments of Plato and his use of images throughout the centuries of the philosophic tradition. For example, Philoponus, in his commentary on Aristotle's treatise on the soul, borrows an image from Plutarch of Athens that derives from Plato's Divided Line to discuss the nature of imagining (*phantasia*). Just as a point that marks the end of a line coming down from above and also a line coming up from below is both a singular point and the endpoint of two different lines, so too an image has a double nature, betwixt and between reality and falsehood.

> In the same way the imagining can be taken both as one and as two, because, on the one hand, it gathers into one what in perceptible things is divided and on the other receives an impression of the simple and, one might say, unitary quality of the divine in imprints and different shapes.[1]

Like a philosopher engaging in dialectic, the process of creating an image can bring together into a single sign things that may be separate (like a goat and a stag), or present in multiple forms (a chariot, a sea monster, a tripartite beast, and even a whole city) something that is actually unitary, like the soul. Thus, like the philosopher who neither knows fully nor is wholly ignorant, but seeks always to move toward the truth, the ambivalent position of the image between reality and falsehood provides a means to move toward the truth, if used philosophically, but away from it, if used without the precautions of philosophic inquiry.

The perilous potential of images, then, requires careful handling, and Plato hedges his images with cautions and caveats, as well as specific critiques of the ways images can mislead. Throughout his work, Plato plays with the many ways in which images represent, using different kinds of images in different dialogues and circumstances. Various essays in this volume address the ways particular Platonic images represent by means of mimesis or analogy, through mirror images that may be clear or distorted or even reversed, or with likenesses in visual or other sensible qualities. Each of these modes of representation provides different effects and serves differents ends in Plato's dialogues, from the reversed mirror image of Achilles in the *Symposium* to the perspectival paintings or sculptures mentioned in the *Sophist* to the abstract analogy of the

1 Philoponus, in Aristotle *De anima* III, 515. 26–29 οὕτω καὶ ἡ φαντασία δύναται καὶ ὡς ἓν καὶ ὡς δύο λαμβάνεσθαι, διότι τῶν μὲν αἰσθητῶν τὸ διῃρημένον εἰς ἓν συναθροίζει, τῶν δὲ θείων τὸ ἁπλοῦν καὶ ὡς ἄν τις εἴποι ἑνιαῖον εἰς τύπους τινὰς καὶ μορφὰς διαφόρους ἀναμάττεται. (Trans. Sheppard, modified). See the discussion in Sheppard 2014: 54–57 (Sheppard, A. 2014. *The poetics of Phantasia: imagination in ancient aesthetics*, Bloomsbury).

Divided Line in the *Republic*. The sensible qualities that the images provide are predominantly visual in the Platonic dialogues, although auditory representations in music or even tactile sensations of pain and pleasure may also be used. The images whose relation to what they represent works through logical analogy (or even mathematical ratio) rather than visual mimesis seem to provide the surest and clearest guide toward truth, but the Divided Line or the eclipse in the *Phaedo* are hardly the most memorable images in Plato's corpus, nor are they the ones that have provoked the most philosophic activity over the centuries. Other features of the images' representations factor into the power of images.

One way in which Plato discusses the power of images is in erotic terms, images whose beauty or vividness provokes the viewer into action. However, the more attractive the image appears itself, the more dangerous it becomes as a distraction from, rather than a guide to, what it represents. Whether such pleasing images appear as the tempting whores of poetry or a statue that arouses lust or even a model of the soul as a city that accounts for internal conflicts, Plato warns repeatedly of the problems that arise from stopping at the image rather than continuing to pursue its referent, of remaining satisfied with the image itself. The images that engender the best philosophic erôs are those that are neither too transparent in their abstraction nor too opaque in their surface appeal, but rather those whose translucence allows a glimpse of the signified while still reminding the viewer of the presence of the sign. An impossible composite, such as a goat-stag or a tripartite monster, may serve to warn that the sign cannot be taken as the thing it represents, but Plato also includes many warnings in his dialogues about the images he uses like the famous one from the *Phaedo*, "No sensible man would insist that these things are exactly as I have described them, but I think that it is fitting for a man to risk the belief—for the risk is a noble one—that *this, or something like this* is true about our souls and their dwelling places."[2]

Philosophically constructed images, then, may need to call attention to their constructed nature, reminding the viewer of the limited perspective of mortals who can never perceive the truth completely or wholly. This perspectivism, as van Riel refers to it, is another way to describe the gap Gonzalez discusses in the erotic response to images; in both cases, the viewer is motivated to go beyond the image in a philosophical pursuit of reality. The power of images to

2 Plato *Phaedo* 81e–82a. Τὸ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα διισχυρίσασθαι οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς ἐγὼ διελήλυθα, οὐ πρέπει νοῦν ἔχοντι ἀνδρί· ὅτι μέντοι ἢ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἢ τοιαῦτ' ἄττα περὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς οἰκήσεις, ἐπείπερ ἀθάνατόν γε ἡ ψυχὴ φαίνεται οὖσα, τοῦτο καὶ πρέπειν μοι δοκεῖ καὶ ἄξιον κινδυνεῦσαι οἰομένῳ οὕτως ἔχειν—καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος.

provoke action or change in the viewer is another recurring theme throughout the volume, from the adoring care of the beloved in the *Phaedrus* to the shaping of the self in the likeness of the philosophic image to the mental turning around in response to the image of the Cave in the *Republic*. In all these cases, Plato's images have the power not simply to illustrate and entertain those unable to grasp philosophic reasoning, but to stir the viewers to action and to transform their very souls.

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The essays here were all presented in draft form at the pair of conferences held in the fall of 2013 at Bryn Mawr College in the United States and in the spring of 2014 at the Université Catholique de Louvain and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium.[3] The conference at Bryn Mawr was organized by Radcliffe Edmonds, who is grateful to the Tri-College Working Group in Ancient Philosophy, the Departments of Greek, Latin, & Classical Studies and Philosophy, the Class of 1902 Lecture Fund, and the offices of the President and Provost at Bryn Mawr College; the Distinguished Visitors Office and the John B. Hurford '60 Center for the Arts and Humanities at Haverford College; and the Departments of Classics and Philosophy, and the office of the Provost at Swarthmore College, for their generous support. The Louvain & Leuven conference was organized by Pierre Destrée and Gerd van Riel, thanks to the generous sponsorship of the FRS/FNRS (Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique de la Communauté Française de Belgique), and the FWO (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek—Vlanderen). Special thanks are due to our assistants at both venues, Charlie Kuper at Bryn Mawr and Erika Gielen at Leuven and Louvain.

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3 Papers delivered by Pierre Destrée, Catherine Collobert, Elsa Grasso, and Richard Hunter at Bryn Mawr and by David Wolfsdorf, Zacharoula Petraki, and Susan Sauvé Meyer in Louvain will be published elsewhere. Video recordings of the papers delivered at Bryn Mawr, including the question sessions after each paper, are available in the Bryn Mawr College Repository (http://repository.brynmawr.edu/plato/Bryn_Mawr/).

Alcibiades' *Eikôn* of Socrates and the Platonic Text: *Symp.* 215a–222d

Andrew Ford

The questions this volume asks, holding that they are indispensible for understanding Plato's philosophy and his way of writing, were ruled out of bounds over 70 years ago in a pioneering classic of the analytic approach to Plato. In *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, first published in 1941, Richard Robinson devoted a chapter to Plato's use of images in which he found the philosopher 'incoherent' on the subject: one the one hand, Robinson charged, Plato frequently resorts to arguments through analogy and imagery; on the other, he repeatedly condemns these forms of argument as inferior and risky.[1] Robinson allowed that some passages in Plato might encourage one to develop a theory that 'images can sometimes be good'. In particular he pointed to a text that is often cited in this connection, *Sophist* 267: there the distinction between the imitator who really knows what he is imitating and the one who doesn't may intimate the possibility that a philosopher could produce a philosophic mimesis of wisdom, one that provides wisdom's genuine likeness (*eikôn*), and this likeness may help to convey its true nature rather than the mere semblance (*phantasma*) of wisdom. But Robinson points out that 'Plato never does this,' at least explicitly, and advises against attempts to supply such an account for him because, 'Plato's whole theoretical philosophy is largely a condemnation of images and a struggle to get away from them'.[2]

The analytic approach has a point in saying that Plato never explicitly comes to terms with the epistemological tension between his many images and his strictly logical arguments. But it must be said that, if Platonic philosophy is largely a 'struggle to get away from' images, he did a pretty poor job of getting away. In fact, Plato rather seems to run toward thinking about shadows, reflections, optical illusions and works of representative art, to say nothing of his fondness for speaking in metaphors, similes, analogies, allegories, and so on. The abundance and salience of imagery in the corpus therefore justifies

1 Robinson (1953), 215. For a critique, see González (1998), 2–4; for a claim that Plato's images have a 'cognitive role', see Pender (2000), 43–60.

2 Robinson (1953), 220. Pender (2000), 40–43 collects Platonic passages on the dangers of images.

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pressing our questions. But the roles played by images and talk about images in Plato are so many and various that it is hard to generalize about them, especially if one concedes to Robinson—as I think one must—that Plato offers no unified-field theory of imagery. Faced with this difficulty and yet wishing to acknowledge the power of images in Plato, I have thought it best to cut the topic down and to focus on a single but resonant Platonic likeness (*eikôn*), one that is very self-consciously presented and elaborately developed and which can, I think, suggest why Plato found images 'good to write with' and why, in some contexts, he confesses that the Platonic text is only *like* what it represents.

1 Socrates as Silenus

One of the most memorable images in Plato is the extended comparison (*eikôn*, plural: *eikones*) by a drunken Alcibiades in the *Symposium* in which he counts the ways that Socrates resembles the Sileni one sees in the windows of sculptors' shops. These were representations of the father/leader of the Satyrs either in the form of carved statuettes or painted boxes. (There is no archaeological evidence for anything like the nested 'Russian Dolls' we may picture to ourselves.) The objects were so made that they could be opened up to reveal little figurines of gods (*agalmata theôn*) within:

> The way I shall attempt to praise Socrates, gentlemen, is through drawing similitudes [*eikones*]. Probably he will think I do this for derision; but I choose my similitude [*eikôn*] for the sake of truth, not to provoke laughter. For I say he is most like [*homoiôtatos*] the Silenus-figures that sit in the statuaries' shops; those, I mean, which our craftsmen make with pipes or flutes in their hands: when their two halves are pulled open, they are found to contain images of gods [*agalmata theôn*].[3]
>
> *Symp.* 215a4–b3

3 Σωκράτη δ' ἐγὼ ἐπαινεῖν, ὦ ἄνδρες, οὕτως ἐπιχειρήσω, **δι' εἰκόνων**. οὗτος μὲν οὖν ἴσως οἰήσεται ἐπὶ τὰ γελοιότερα, ἔσται δ' ἡ **εἰκὼν** τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἕνεκα, οὐ τοῦ γελοίου. φημὶ γὰρ δὴ **ὁμοιότατον** αὐτὸν εἶναι τοῖς σιληνοῖς τούτοις τοῖς [B] ἐν τοῖς ἑρμογλυφείοις καθημένοις, οὕστινας ἐργάζονται οἱ δημιουργοὶ σύριγγας ἢ αὐλοὺς ἔχοντας, οἳ διχάδε διοιχθέντες φαίνονται ἔνδοθεν **ἀγάλματα ἔχοντες** θεῶν. All translations from the *Symposium* are lightly revised from H.N. Fowler's 1925 version for the Loeb Classical Library.

Alcibiades introduces this speech as an *eikôn*, a 'similitude' or 'likeness', of Socrates, using a word that has many meanings in Plato.[4] Some of its uses go to the core of Platonic metaphysics and epistemology (one thinks of the *eikones* of the divided line or the cave), but my concern will be with this *eikôn* as a rhetorical figure, for as such it can tell us something about Plato's practice as a writer who uses images. Historical context justifies taking this approach, for Alcibiades is being self-consciously rhetorical here and the rhetorical use of comparisons, *eikones*, had already attracted technical interest among language specialists in the later fifth century: in his survey of rhetorical technical terms in *Phaedrus* 267c, Plato lists 'iconology' (*eikonologia*) among the topics studied by Gorgias' younger associate Polus, which the scholiast interprets as 'demonstrating something through *eikones* and illustrations'. Among the rhetoricians, *eikôn* became the term for 'simile'.[5]

In our passage, the mention of *eikones* in the first line and subsequent repetitions of words like *eikôn* and *eoika* point to a specific mode of iconology we can call, after Richard Hunter, the 'likeness' game.[6] This game, referred to under a variety of Greek terms such as *eikonas legein* ('to speak likenesses'), *eikazein* ('to compare') and *eikasia* ('comparing'), can be recognized when one person says to another that the latter 'is like' (*homoios* is also common in these contexts) this or that animal or thing in appearance and often in behavior.[7] The game is old and is already to be discerned in *Odyssey* 6: when a castaway Odysseus approaches the princess Nausicaa, among the first things he says to her is how much she is like the slender Delian palm (*Od.* 6.160–169). This instance is, for obvious strategic reasons, a flattering use of the topos, but improvising personal likenesses was also commonly used as a teasing gesture: Hesychius glosses *eikazein* with *skôptein* ('to tease') and Aristotle testifies that people would 'tease' those who were not beautiful by comparing them to fire-breathing goats or butting rams.[8] The likeness game had affinities with the archaic riddle or *ainos*, for a witty *eikôn* like Alcibiades' reveals unexpected similarities between the comparison and the *comparandum*. This riddling tendency made the likeness game, like the riddle, especially at home in symposia: it was a controlled way of testing the tempers of those in a group and served to draw them together in an atmosphere of reciprocal play among equals; its riddling aspect helped to unite them further by inviting them to participate

4 Pender (2000), 37–38.

5 See McCall (1969), 4–5.

6 Hunter (2004), 5.

7 Examples in Radermacher (1954), 272–274.

8 Aristotle, *De Gen. An.* 4. 3. 769b18.

in a collaborative hermeneutic activity. By the late fifth century the likeness game had fallen in status in Athens where such sport was regarded as, in Eduard Fraenkel's words, 'witticisms with which … people of modest intellectual pretensions [were] accustomed to amuse themselves'.[9] Hence it is best attested at this time in Attic comedy.[10]

The flurry of terms for *eikones* in Alcibiades' opening sentence, then, markedly lowered the tone of the talk, and this was perfectly appropriate in context: a lower register is appropriate to the impaired speaker's ethos and to his subject as well, for although Alcibiades agrees to abide by the party's rule and speak a speech of praise (214b9–215a3), he chooses to praise not a divinity like Eros but a mortal. A second programmatic point is added when Alcibiades says that Socrates may regard his *eikôn* as a piece of ridicule intended only to provoke laughter (*geloiotera*), but there is truth in it. Here we recognize the gentlemanly posture of half-seriousness, *spoudiaiogeloion*, but at the same time are encouraged to look for some truth in the outlandish image to come.[11] And so let us ask what truth this image, this *eikôn*, may conceal.

Of the several respects in which Socrates resembles the Sileni the most important is an opposition between inside and outside:[12] Socrates' famous snub nose and flat face could well put one in mind of the archetypal Satyr, but this inelegant outside hides an inside full of marvelous stuff, as do those crafted boxes. In an excellent discussion, Richard Hunter points out that more is going on than affirming the excellence beneath the philosopher's unprepossessing appearance, for the *eikôn* also advises us to see if serious philosophical ideas may lurk beneath the surface of Alcibiades' playful discourse.[13] In this vein, the general tendency of late has been to relate the comparison to the text's concern with erotics and issues of gender and sexuality. Angela Hobbs, for example, sees in Silenus' interior figurines Diotima's image of male pregnancy now reused at a lower level.[14] Other interpreters put the comparison into a pederastic

9 Fraenkel (1950), vol. 3, 773.

10 Good examples in Aristophanes *Birds* 30 ff., 804 ff. and *Wasps* 1308–1315, where note the disdainful attitude of the sophisticate (*dexios*) Thuphrastus (1315); cf. *Frogs* 905–906. Notwithstanding snobbish disapproval, Aristophanes was proud enough of his *eikones* to complain that other poets stole them (*Clouds* 557–560).

11 See Hunter (2004), 4, 9–10 on *spoudaiogeloion* ('behind Socrates' playfulness is serious philosophy in reach of interpretative efforts').

12 With διοιχθέντες … φαίνονται ἔνδοθεν of the Sileni at 215b2–3 cf. ἔξωθεν περιβέβληται … ἔνδοθεν δὲ ἀνοιχθεὶς of Socrates at 216d5–6.

13 Hunter (2004), 5–13.

14 Hobbs (2006), 253, 268.

context: Deborah Steiner divines in Alcibiades a longing to penetrate his idol Socrates for access to mental depths,[15] and C.D.C. Reeve has added detail, one might say lurid detail, by connecting the idea, mooted earlier in the dialogue by Socrates, that wisdom might be 'poured' from one person into another (175D) with imagery taken over from the *Phaedrus* of seeds of wisdom, *spermata*, planted in the soul by dialectic.[16]

I propose a different tack. While it is true that Sileni and Satyrs are lusty beasts, Alcibiades does not compare Socrates to Silenus, but to an artistic representation of one, and I hold that this *represented-ness* is crucial to understanding the comparison. As Hunter suggests in calling the Symposium 'a classic piece in the history of interpretation',[17] the first thing the *eikôn* teaches is that understanding requires getting beneath surface impressions, hence a large part of the deeper significance of this passage lies in its very invitation to seek out a deeper significance. In other words, I will be speaking about penetrating in a hermeneutic rather than sexual sense; but this activity too has, I hope, ravishments of its own.

Another reason to focus on hermeneutics is that Alcibiades immediately goes on to compare Socrates to Marsyas and his pipes:

> And I further suggest that he **resembles** the satyr Marsyas. Now, as to your resemblance, Socrates, to these **in form**, I do not suppose even you yourself will dispute it; but I have next to tell you that you are like them in every other respect. You are a lecherous fellow, eh? If you will not confess it, I have witnesses at hand. Are you not a piper? Why, yes, and a far more marvelous one than the satyr.
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> 215b3–b8

Now while pipes might send pan-sexualists scurrying off in another direction, I would stress that with Marsyas as *comparandum* we move from Socrates' appearance and behavior to his discourse, 'the pipings of this Satyr' (216c5).[18] Indeed, the reading I propose here is that Alcibiades' *eikôn* as a whole works like an *ainos* in its other sense as 'allegory', and that the figures of Silenus and Marsyas ultimately direct us to regard Plato's text as a cunning kind of verbal icon that, like Sileni, has a precious hidden meaning for those able to penetrate

15 Steiner (1996) and (2001), 131–132.

16 Reeve (2006), 124–146.

17 Hunter (2004), 129; cf. 11–12.

18 This point is noted in an excellent discussion of statues and statuettes in Plato by Morgan (forthcoming).

its surface sense. After offering my reading, I will draw some implications that extend beyond this passage and touch on the question of the role of images in Plato. If, as I argue, Alcibiades' figure is an *eikôn* of the *eikôn* that is the Platonic dialogue, this highly self-reflexive moment may suggest some reasons that Plato resorts to similes, and why, at least in discussing some issues, the language of the Platonic text can only be *like* what it represents.

My argument for an allegorical reading here is the usual one—the claim that such a reading best fits the details of the text, fits the most of them, and gives significance to passages that might otherwise seem irrelevant or mere rhetorical flourishes. In fact, I will argue that some of the qualities Alcibiades picks out in Silenus make better sense as descriptors of Plato's Socratic texts than they do of the chattering philosopher. But before I prevail upon the reader's patience to follow me through the high points of Alcibiades' speech I would like to say that, like Plato, I am generally suspicious of allegory and think it is often overused by critics, especially when it is warranted by nothing more than an assumption that all (literary) language is allegorical. Nonetheless, Plato was clearly familiar with allegorical interpretation and only objected to it because it might be misread by literal-minded young people (*Rep.* 378d3–e1). In support, then, for an allegorical approach to Alcibiades' *eikôn*, I offer a later text that alludes to this passage and applies its figure, precisely, to characterize the author's own writing. I am not referring to the prologue to *Gargantua*, where Rabelais indeed does this, but to a text written in 404 CE by Synesius of Cyrene. It is a letter accompanying copies of some of his writings that he is sending to his teacher, the philosopher Hypatia in Alexandria. In the letter Synesius is concerned to defend these writings against detractors he labels Telchines. This Callimachean allusion is one sign that our Cyrenean author is offering a sophisticated literary defense of his literary prose, and he soon comes to draw upon Plato. Synesius first declares that his model for how to organize a discourse has been 'the marvelous text, the *Phaedrus*' (*Epist.* 154.168–169);[19] he goes on to assure Hypatia that his critics fail to appreciate the deeper meaning of his work:

> Anyone who is not untrained in detecting even a certain divine countenance hidden under a coarse outside [*skhêma*]—just as [*hôsper*] Athenian artists used to enclose Aphrodite and the Graces and similar charming divinities in sculpted figures [*agalmasi*] of Sileni or Satyrs—such a person will not fail to notice that my text [*gramma*] also unveils so many

19 τὸ θεσπέσιον γράμμα, τὸν Φαῖδρον.

> mystic teachings, which will escape others because they feign to be extraneous additions and to be thrown into the discourse, as it may seem, at random and artlessly.[20]
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> *Epist.* 154.75–84 ed. GARZYA and ROQUES

On the heels of Synesius' citation of the *Phaedrus*, the allusion to the *Symposium* is unmistakable. Synesius changes the rhetorical mode of his model: his introductory "just as" (*hôsper*) makes his *eikôn* a simile, a more conventional rhetorical figure than Plato's 'likeness game'; but Synesius retains the Sileni as a figure for discourse with hidden depths beneath its surface. On the reading of Alcibiades' speech proposed below, Synesius will be seen to have read his Plato well and rightly to have taken from the image an ideal of marvelous writing that rewards cultivated and sensitive readers with hidden mysteries that may escape the unskilled and undiscerning.

2 Socrates as Marsyas

Returning to Alcibiades' *eikôn*, we remarked that adding Marsyas to Silenus as likenesses of Socrates made no great difference in terms of ethos or appearance, but the new comparandum was significant because it allowed Plato to replace the silent pipes of Silenus, carved or painted, with Marsyas' sounding ones. This turn allows Alcibiades' *eikôn* to go beyond Socrates' physical appearance (*eidos*) and behavior to take up the topic of the uncanny effect that *his language* (*logoi*) has on people, for out of Socrates' mouth comes a music more wonderful than Marsyas':

> Now Marsyas entranced mankind through the power of his lips by using musical instruments, which is still possible today for anyone who plays his tunes—for the flute music of Olympus belonged, I may tell you, to Marsyas his teacher—so that if anyone flutes his tunes, whether an excellent flute-player or a common flute-girl, these tunes alone [*mona*] produce enchantment and reveal by the divinity that is in them who are the apt recipients of the deities and their mystery rites. You differ from

20 ὅστις δὲ οὐκ ἀγύμναστος ἐπιφωρᾶσαί τι καὶ πρόσωπον θεῖον ὑπὸ φαυλοτέρῳ κρυπτόμενον σχήματι, ὥσπερ ἐποίουν Ἀθήνησιν οἱ δημιουργοί, Ἀφροδίτην καὶ Χάριτας καὶ τοιαῦτα κάλλη θεῶν ἀγάλμασι Σειληνῶν καὶ Σατύρων ἀμπίσχοντες, τοῦτον οὐ λήσει τὸ γράμμα, συχνὰ καὶ τῶν ἀβεβήλων ἀποκαλύψαν δογμάτων ὑπὸ τῇ προσποιήσει τοῦ παρέλκειν ἑτέρους λανθάνοντα καὶ τῷ λίαν εἰκῇ καὶ ὡς ἂν δόξειεν ἀφελῶς ἐγκατεσπάρθαι τῷ λόγῳ.

> him in one point only—that you produce the same effect **with simple prose [bare *logoi*] unaided by instruments.**[21]
>
> 215c1–d1

Socratic speech, like the Satyr's tunes, has a unique (*mona*) power to take possession of its hearers and reveal their psychic states; but it is even more remarkable: whereas Marsyas needed musical instruments (*di' organôn*) to enchant men, Socrates only uses the power of his voice. This last point may seem a mere rhetorical flourish, a nice piece of praise *a fortiori* that gives the philosopher's discourse a one-up over Marsyas' tunes. But it is more than that: when Alcibiades says Socrates' only difference form the Satyr is that he performs without instruments in 'bare *logoi*' (*psilois logois*), the expression is loaded and shifts us from thinking of kinds of music to genres of literature.

In Plato's time the Greeks had no single, settled term to designate 'prose' literature. *logos* was often used, but its meaning were very broad; when precision was wanted, the expression 'bare *logoi*' could serve. In the *Menexenus*, for example, Socrates uses it to contrast the funeral oration he is extemporizing with poetic praises of great Athenian warriors of the past: he says that 'the poets have finely used the musical art in praising their excellence to all, whereas if we try to praise the same things in bare *logos* we would come off the worse'. (*Menx.* 239b8–c2)[22] Referring to language stripped of poetry's rhetorical and musical charms, 'bare *logos*' was precise enough to serve as a taxonomic label distinguishing prose from poetry: in *Laws* Plato deplores contemporary poets who 'separate rhythm from music, putting bare *logoi* into verse'. (*L.* 11.669d6–e1)[23] The same pattern of usage is found in Aristotle. In the *Rhetoric* (1404b12–14), he distinguishes between diction that is appropriate to verse (*epi tôn metrôn*) and that suitable for prose (*en tois psilois logois*). Like Plato, he also uses 'bare *logoi*' as a taxonomic term: the diaresis of genres of imitation in *Poetics* 1 defines as

21 ὁ μέν γε **δι' ὀργάνων** ἐκήλει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος δυνάμει, καὶ ἔτι νυνὶ ὃς ἂν τὰ ἐκείνου αὐλῇ—ἃ γὰρ Ὄλυμπος ηὔλει, Μαρσύου λέγω, τούτου διδάξαντος—τὰ οὖν ἐκείνου ἐάντε ἀγαθὸς αὐλητὴς αὐλῇ ἐάντε φαύλη αὐλητρίς, μόνα κατέχεσθαι ποιεῖ καὶ δηλοῖ τοὺς τῶν θεῶν τε καὶ τελετῶν δεομένους διὰ τὸ θεῖα εἶναι. σὺ δ' ἐκείνου τοσοῦτον μόνον διαφέρεις, ὅτι **ἄνευ ὀργάνων ψιλοῖς λόγοις** ταὐτὸν τοῦτο ποιεῖς.

22 ποιηταί τε αὐτῶν ἤδη καλῶς τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐν μουσικῇ ὑμνήσαντες εἰς πάντας μεμηνύκασιν· ἐὰν οὖν ἡμεῖς ἐπιχειρῶμεν τὰ αὐτὰ **λόγῳ ψιλῷ** κοσμεῖν, τάχ' ἂν δεύτεροι φαινοίμεθα.

23 διασπῶσιν οἱ ποιηταὶ ῥυθμὸν μὲν καὶ σχήματα μέλους χωρίς, λόγους ψιλοὺς εἰς μέτρα τιθέντες. Conversely, musicians who compose music and rhythm without words indulge in 'bare kithara- or aulos-playing' (*L.* 11.669e1–2). Similar uses of *psilos* are *Politicus* 268b and *Phaedrus* 278c, on which see Ford (2010), 233–235.

one class of imitative art 'the art that uses only bare *logoi* or [*logoi* in] meter, the meters being either mixed or of a single kind throughout'. (*Po.* 1447a28–b2)[24]

Hence Alcibiades' contrast between Marsyas' music and Socrates' 'bare *logos*' as alternate media of expression adds the perspective of literary taxonomy, and in this perspective Socrates' *logoi* ('talk') during his lifetime belongs in the same class with prose texts, 'bare *logoi*', that may embody those *logoi*. The special power Alcibiades finds in the philosopher's oral performances is hinted to inhere also in certain texts that capture that speech, which is to say that the Marsyas-analogy extends to those discourses that were in Plato's time called not 'dialogues' but 'Socratic *logoi*'. This implication is supported by what Alcibiades says in the passage immediately following, which speaks about Socrates' *logoi* very much like written texts. Proof of the power of Socratic speech, he says, is that when we hear other orators speaking, even good ones, we care very little; but when we hear the *logoi* of Socrates we are thunderstruck and spellbound; and this is so, he adds, whether we hear the *logoi* from him or from another speaking his *logoi*—man, woman or boy—even if the speaker be mediocre (215d1–6). In saying that the *logoi* of Socrates manifest their powers no matter who gives voice to them, Alcibiades is including in his praise mediated re-performances of Socrates' *logoi*, i.e. written *Sokratikoi logoi* as performed or read by others; these, he suggests, may be as powerful as the performances of the living master himself, no matter how skilled the reader. As with the compositions of Marsyas, the power emanates from the original score (or text), not from the performer, who may be good, bad or indifferent. Alcibiades also hints at the power written *logoi* have to last after death as reminders of a life or a deed when he momentarily fantasizes about how much he would miss Socrates if he were to die (at 216c2–3); is there anything that can replace the master's voice when he is gone? Here Alcibiades' earlier and apparently gratuitous assertion that Marsyas' auletic melodies were the same as the sacred 'tunes of Olympus' comes into play:[25] These cathartic tunes were still widely used in fourth-century Athens, continuing to work their uncanny effects 'even now' (212c2), long after their creator's pipes were silenced in the mythic past. So too, those living after the philosopher's death (by definition, any reader of Socratic literature), can experience the unique power of his speech thanks to 're-performances' of *Sokratikoi logoi.*

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24 ἡ δὲ μόνον τοῖς λόγοις ψιλοῖς ἢ τοῖς **μέτροις** καὶ τούτοις εἴτε μιγνῦσα μετ' ἀλλήλων εἴθ' ἑνί τινι γένει χρωμένη τῶν **μέτρων** (ed. Taràn-Gutas). On text and interpretation, see Ford (2010), 222–224.

25 On assimilating Olympus as a disciple of Marsyas (as in *L.* III.677d; cf. *Ion* 533b) see Moutsopoulos (1959), 196. On the musical aspects of 'the tunes of Olympus', Barker (2011).

After dwelling on the effects that Socrates' 'piping' (216c5) has had on him and others, Alcibiades turns back to the Silenus figurines and applies their outside-inside opposition in ways that are, again, as suited to describing Socratic texts as to describing Socrates. With the promise that he will disclose things about Socrates that even his familiars do not know (216c7–d1), Alcibiades begins with the philosopher's pretense to ignorance about the love of fair boys: this, he declares, is a piece of 'Silenus-like posturing' (216d4); 'just like a carved Silenus' (216d5–6), Socrates has 'donned,' as it were, a 'cloak of dissimulation' (Bury's translation of 216d5); but when opened up, he teems with moderation inside (216d6–7). Indeed, Socrates' pretentions of indifference to beauty are always ironic (216e4), as Alcibiades can say, having had the privilege of seeing through the irony: 'Whether anyone else has caught him in a serious moment and opened him, and seen the images inside, I know not; but I saw them one day, and thought them divine and golden' (216e5–217a1). The Silenus-text, then, is an ironic one on its surface: perplexing, pretending ignorance, giving only a very imperfect idea at first glance of the value it has.[26]

Alcibiades will return to his satyrs and Sileni at the end of his performance and we will see the same issues recur. Before turning to them it may give my allegorical interpretation some support from historical context to pause and say a word about why Plato should have been concerned to thematize his own writing here. The dazzling brilliance of Plato's dialogues should not blind us to the fact that in fourth-century Athens they had to compete for readers in a literary milieu that was exploding with written prose texts, bare *logoi* of all kinds. There was, first of all, a subset of that vast production that was called *Sokratikoi logoi*: not just dozens but hundreds of texts on Socrates were composed in the first decades of the fourth century.[27] When we add in all the *logoi* purveyed by sophistic writers and teachers of the time—the playful and the serious, the rhetorical and the political, the theoretical and the pedagogical—we can see that Alcibiades' insistence on the uniqueness of Socratic *logoi* was not gratuitous flattery but cut hard against contemporary literary culture: according to him, no other prose, however eloquent, interests one who has sampled Socratic prose. He supports this point not by comparing (anachronistically) the proliferating written *logoi* of Plato's day but by shifting to Periclean oratory, thereby maintaining the dialogue's dramatic date but also conveniently avoiding directly naming Plato's living competitors. Alcibiades

26 My glosses of 'irony' as a descriptor of Plato's text (cf. *Rep.* 337a: 'Socrates' usual *eirôneia*'), are taken from Dover (1979) 168 ('mock modesty, pretended ignorance') and *LSJ*, ('feign ignorance, so as to perplex'), citing *inter alia* Arist. *Rh.*1379b31.

27 See Ford (2010), 29–30, 39; figures in Rosetti (2005).

says he has heard excellent orators, including Pericles, and insists they were not so moving as Socrates' talk (215e4–7). To be better than Pericles is high praise, for he was the paragon of affecting speakers.[28] Eupolis' memorable characterization of him—'persuasion sat upon his lips, so enchanting was he, and he alone of speakers left a sting behind in his hearers' (Fr. 102.5–7 K-A)—seems to have inspired Plato in making another *eikôn* about Socratic talk: Meno compares undergoing Socratic elenchus to being zapped by a sting ray, 'If you will permit me the joke, you seem to me exactly like, in form and otherwise, that broad flat numbing fish'. (*Men.* 80a4–6)[29] This stunning Pericles is appealed to in the *Symposium* as a model for prose that, like Socrates' *logoi*, not only astonishes and amazes its audience (215d5–6) but makes their hearts leap and tears flow like Corybants' (215e1–3). This highly praised past master of oral eloquence serves as a standard for *logoi* to aspire to, and so Alcibiades' repeated insistence that Periclean power is *unique* to Socratic *logoi* (215c5, 216b1; cf. 222a3) is competitive: we will see in the final section how Plato converts this boast into the suggestion that his own *Symposium* is a paragon among available *logoi*.

In the last section of his speech (221c–222b), after anecdotes about the attempted seduction of Socrates (216c–219d) and his courage at Potidaea (219d–221c), Alcibiades resumes the likeness game in a new form to show Socrates' uniqueness. Casting about for paradigmatic figures from the poetic tradition, he says that one can compare (*apeikaseien*) Brasidas with Achilles for bravery or Pericles with Nestor for eloquence, but Socrates and his *logoi* are incomparable; if one should make an *eikôn* for him (*apeikazoi*), the only possible comparison is with Satyrs and Sileni (221d3–6). Note, once again, that the subject of praise is not simply Socrates but 'Socrates and his *logoi*' (221d2, 5–6). Alcibiades' praise of Socrates' singularity among all past and present figures (221c5) says in effect that he is unique as a character in literature, an *eikôn* of virtue and eloquence beyond compare.[30]

This extravagant claim would seem to be a good stopping point for Alcibiades' speech, but our tipsy speaker bumbles on: pleading befuddlement, he says, he forgot to mention how Socrates' *logoi* are like Sileni (221d7–e1). The inebriate's haplessness is Plato's ironic way of highlighting what is to come so

28 Cf. Yunis (2011), 206 (on *Phdr.* 269a5) and 209 (on 269e4–70a6).

29 δοκεῖς μοι παντελῶς, εἰ δεῖ τι καὶ σκῶψαι, ὁμοιότατος εἶναι τό τε εἶδος καὶ τἆλλα ταύτῃ τῇ πλατείᾳ νάρκῃ τῇ θαλαττίᾳ. As the passage goes on, we see that the 'likeness game' could induce the victim of the comparison to 'offer an *eikôn* in return' (ἀντεικάσω, 80c4).

30 Thucydides praises Brasidas as a kind of second Achilles (Bk 4.11), showing that this part of Plato's text also runs in familiar lines.

that we soberly keep our wits about us and notice that Alcibiades is about to complete a circle that he had earlier left open. As mentioned, Alcibiades started with the Sileni in 212a to stress the difference between Socrates' unappealing outside and admirable inside, and then switched to Marsyas in 212b to speak not only of his Satyr-like *eidos* but of his spellbinding *logoi*. He came back to the Sileni in 212d to speak of Socrates' person and behavior, the moderation underlying his Satyric appearance and his dissembling irony; he now returns to fill in how Socratic *logoi* are like (silent) Sileni with the focus on what it is like to listen to (or read) those *logoi*.

'People who are willing to listen to the Socratic *logoi*', he says, 'may find them humorous or laughable [*geloioi*] at first, because they are clothed in ridiculous language like the hide of a hubristic Satyr' (221e1–4). All his chatter about pack-asses and cobblers may cause the 'inexperienced and thoughtless' (221e6) to laugh at these *logoi*, but if you treat them like Sileni and 'open them up, you find that they are the only (NB) *logoi* that have intelligence, and that their wondrous *agalmata* of excellence are worth the attention of anyone who wants to be good' (222a1–6). Bury remarks that 'The whole of [Alcibiades'] account of Socrates' λόγοι is virtually an encomium of his σοφία'.[31] I think this is to take one's eye off the ball and that the focus is steadily kept on Socrates' *logoi*, and implicitly, as I will argue, on them as preserved in the *Sokratikoi logoi* written by Plato. Alcibiades' *eikôn* turns out to be praise of the Platonic text as a uniquely powerful embodiment of Socratic philosophy and, at the same time, as an instruction to readers to construe the *Symposium* by going beneath its often humorous surface and seeking out its divine core.

3 Inside the Image

The readers of the *Symposium* have now been repeatedly told to look for what lies beneath the surface, and so it is worth reviewing what has been said about what is to be found there. When Alcibiades first introduces the Sileni, their contents are described as 'statues' (*agalmata*) of the gods (215b3). Plato's diction is worth watching here: an *agalma* is, etymologically, 'an object of delight', and was commonly used to designate objects, ranging from humble statuettes to piles of gold to monumental sculpture, that were offered at shrines to please the gods and encourage them to be favorable. Accordingly, the word *agalmata* came to be associated with images of the gods (or heroized mortals), while

31 Bury (1909), *ad* 222a.

depictions of mortals were called *eikones*.[32] In accordance with common usage, Alcibiades differentiates the *eikôn* he makes of Socrates from the *agalmata* of the gods. We get a second description of the insides of Sileni soon after when Socrates' person is said to be like a carved Silenus that is 'full of every form of moderation when opened up' (216d6–7). There is no contradiction between the two passages if we think of human virtuousness as a way of imaging the divine, as the best way for humans to resemble gods.[33] The equivalence is affirmed soon after (at 216e–217a), when Alcibiades refers to 'the *agalmata* within' (*ta entos agalmata*, 216e6) that one can behold when Socrates is not being ironic. Lastly, we are told what Socrates' discourses look like from the inside: here we find that they contain 'the most divine and most abundant images of virtue [*agalmat' arêtes*]', and that these *agalmata* of excellence are 'the proper objects of study for those who aim to be good' (222a3–6).

After this series of invitations promising us great rewards if we get inside the *eikôn*, we end up with an *agalma*, which is not exactly an *eikôn* but nonetheless is an image or at least an artistic fabrication. There are images not only outside but inside the Sileni, and it is to my mind a quintessential piece of Platonic irony that at the heart of the image (*eikôn*) is another sort of image (*agalma*). At the center of the labyrinth, at the end of our search, we find no *Ding an sich*, but another representational object, pointing beyond itself, needing decipherment. The point is highlighted if we contrast the passage quoted earlier from Synesius, for the most striking divergence in his use of the image is where he puts the *agalmata*: for Plato *agalmata* of the gods or of human excellence are at the inner core, they are 'the *agalmata* within' (216e6); but Synesius wants to locate Christian truth at the heart of his text, with no irony or invitation to further interpretation. Accordingly, he relocates the *agalmata* on the outside, using it of the 'images of the Sileni and Satyrs that enfold' the truth. (*Epist.* 154.79–80)[34] The surface *agalmata* are to be seen through, looked past, whereas for Plato they are the non-final end of an interpretative effort that is part of an ethical quest. In the *Symposium* the reader/interpreter doesn't rest,

32 On the tendency for *agalma* to be used for gods and heroes and *eikôn* for mortals, see Robert (1960), 11–12, 124 n. 2 and (1968), 832–840. But the distinction is not always maintained: Koonce (1988), 108–110. For Greek terms for statues, with bibliography, see Bremer (2013), 7–8.

33 Cf. Diotima's claim at 212a2–7 that the one who has beheld the truly fine will give birth not to images of virtue (εἴδωλα ἀρετῆς) but to true virtue (ἀλλὰ ἀληθῆ), and such a one will be, as far as it is possible for humankind, dear to the gods and immortal. The topic of 'becoming like a god' in Plato is much studied of late: references and discussion in Armstrong 2004.

34 ἀγάλμασι Σειληνῶν καὶ Σατύρων ἀμπίσχοντες.

but goes deeper and deeper. So when and where does the process stop? Here the switch from *eikôn* to *agalma theôn* again provides a clue: Plato does not call the images at the heart of his discourse *eikônes*, whose etymological sense of 'likeness' would suggest that they give information about the original. Avoiding *eikôn* avoids any presumptuous promise that his makings resemble (the root meaning of *eikôn*) their original;[35] in their place we are given *agalmata* which, in its root sense of 'objects of delight', could be extended to refer to verbal as well as manufactured offerings.[36]

The idea that literary texts can carry deep meanings that it is the critic's job to bring to light is so common in modern literary scholarship as to sound banal. But it should be remembered that for most ancient readers and teachers of literature this was far from being a routine assumption. The idea that a proper understanding of a text required putting aside its outer surface to plumb its hidden meanings was indeed promoted in some circles, but typically in esoteric communities, and it was usually applied to mystical texts, as in the allegorical reading of the Orphic *Theogony* by the Derveni author.[37] For Plato to intimate that this is the mode of reading required to appreciate Socratic discourse, then, was significant, and it is fitting that Alcibiades insinuates this idea in such an elaborate way, a way that requires and rewards conscientious decoding.[38]

Alcibiades' speech is the final and capping speech in this anthology of Greek discursive styles—literary, medical, cultural, comic, tragic, and philosophic. For this intensely prepared, climactic moment Plato elevated a low-class topos of drawing similitudes and made it a vehicle for indirectly praising his own writing.[39] Alcibiades' final characterization of what lies inside the image—what makes it a 'proper object of study for those who aim to be good' (222a3–6)—reads as protreptic and so cashes out the allusions to Platonic writing in his

35 Cf. *Phdr*. 246c6–d1: 'The immortal is not named by reasoned speech; having neither seen nor conceived the god, we *fashion* some immortal creature [*zôon*]'. Cf. *Tht*. 175e.

36 E.g., Bacchylides Ode 5.4 (Maehler), referring to his praise song for Hiero as an '*agalma* sweetly given to you from the violet-crowned Muses'. Cf. 10.11.

37 Of course, there were those who would treat the Homeric poems as hermetic objects requiring deep understanding, but this was precisely to convert them from cultural objects held in common to exclusive possessions: see Ford (2002), 85–88.

38 A further attraction of esoteric readings, of course, is that they elevate participants to the status of initiates: Alcibiades quotes a formula of mystic hermeneutics when he interrupts his tale of seducing Socrates to bid the servants 'and any uninitiated bystanders' (*bebêlos* and *agroikos*), to 'put doors on your ears' (218b5–7), with Ford (2002), 75–76. We readers are thereby invited to keep our ears open—to keep reading attentively—and so to join the initiates.

39 We may note in the list of sophistical topoi in *Phdr*. 267a4 the *parepainos*, 'indirect praise'.

eikôn. The meandering speaker has been shifting his object of praise ever since he declared he would praise Socrates rather than the topic on the table, *eros* (214d6–10), and it proves that his ultimate object of praise is texts that are multi-layered and ironic, like the one we are reading. Implicit, then, in Alcibiades' *eikôn* is a claim for the superiority of Plato's *Symposium* against other accounts of Socrates' banquet, and this theme is already struck in its multi-layered opening, which conspicuously throws its entanglement with other Socratic texts before the reader's eyes: our narrator, Apollodorus, is delivering an account to an unnamed interlocutor (e.g., us) of 'the banquet where Agathon, Socrates and Alcibiades and others gave speeches about *eros*' (172a7–b3). We hear that the interlocutor has not been well informed: his account of this long ago party comes from someone else (*allos tis*), who in turn heard it from a none too inspiring source, Phoenix son of Philippos, 'one of the three most famous clowns of antiquity' (172b3–4).[40] We cannot historically gloss all the parties involved in the chain of transmission, but we may suspect that under these allusive names lie other producers of texts purporting to provide accounts of this legendary party: Xenophon was not the only Socratic to write a *Symposium* recreating Socrates at dinner with Alcibiades and Agathon.[41] Plato, then, opens his work by setting the version he is about to offer against others', alleging in its favor that it has been checked with Socrates himself (173b4–6, i.e., reminding us that Plato was a student of Socrates). As a discourse claiming authoritative status on this much-contested theme, with all eye-witnesses gone, the *Symposium* enters as another representation, an *eikôn* in speech, that models Socratic alongside other forms of discourse. And within this *eikôn* Alcibiades tells an *eikôn* that suggests what value there may be in *eikones* that can rise to the task of revealing the *agamlata theôn*.

As a coded message within an ironic text, Alcibiades' *eikôn* has affinities with the *ainos* of archaic aristocratic symposia where the hiddenness of the message functioned to reinforce the solidarity of the group. Plato, however, is a writer rather than symposiast, and so re-purposes hidden meaning to forge a connection between reader and (absent) writer; thereby he invites sympathetic readers, dispersed in place and time but united in a taste for deeper truth, to self-select and join a community that prides itself on not being 'inexpert and thoughtless' about texts. In drawing the *Symposium* toward a close, Alcibiades proposes an *eikôn* that ostensibly describes Socrates' way of teaching but he

40 Nails (2002), 239. For an analysis of the opening of the *Symposium*, see Halperin (1992), with the remarks in the same volume by A. Kosman (p. 85) and M. Frede (p. 219).

41 Bury (1904), xvii–xviii. Robin (1989) xvii: cf. references to the *Symp*. in *Phdr*. 242b, 261a.

ends up blurting out an *eikôn* of that ever absent, ever elusive author's unique way of writing. Such is Plato's literary audacity and his cleverness at self-fashioning as an artist.

In concluding, I'd like to relate briefly some implications of the passage for Plato's larger thinking on images as discussed in this volume. I have argued that Alcibiades' *eikôn* finally points toward the *Symposium* itself as a supreme example of the verbal *eikones* known as Socratic *logoi*. Such a precious work of verbal art has many of the same features and powers as those images (*agalmata*) of one's beloved that Radcliffe Edmonds (in this volume) discusses in the *Phaedrus*: when one who has beheld higher realities sees an image of beauty in a godlike face or form, he shudders and breaks out in sweat in awe and is tempted to revere the beautiful one as a god, even making offerings as to the *agalma* of a god (*Phdr.* 251a1–7). As Edmonds says, the lover will set the beloved on a pedestal as an image of the divine reality; so too the Platonic text can be set apart from the hubbub of *logoi*, carefully tended and read with reverence as an *agalma* that both disturbs us and directs the soul toward divine reality. But the ironic, enigmatic text insists that it provides only an image of excellence, for it would be idolatry for the fledgling philosopher to become ensnared by a semblance, even the 'semblance of a divine countenance', as Synesius put it (*Epist.* 154.176). Hence I would root Plato's hermeneutic evasiveness in Socrates' unconventional but deep piety in the early dialogues as expounded by Gerd Van Riel.[42] In accordance with such skeptical piety, a reasoned discourse about the gods can only end in producing *eikones*, saying at best what is like them, what is likely, what is likely to be like them. It is worth noting how many of the images discussed in this volume are of invisible things, as Plato puts it in *Politicus*, those very important things like the soul or the gods for which we have no picture (*eidôlon*) (285b–286b).[43]

On the subject of the gods, the *Symposium* promises us an *agalma*, which we should not gloss as a picture (*eidôlon*) or a resemblance (*eikôn*) but rather as an *agalma* in the sense of an offering; the Platonic text is a crafted, affecting object that, though piety forecloses us from being sure that it will please the gods, may at least raise the mind to picture gods and so be worthy of being dedicated to their veneration. In aspiring to become godlike, virtue is the best course, and in speaking about the divine it is best is to be pious, not to presume to capture the divine in human speech, in an *eikôn*, but to work with the materials we have and make an *agalma*, an object of delight that just might give them

42 Cf. Van Riel (2013), Ch. 1; cf. Vlastos (2000) and Burnyeat (1997).

43 Analysis in Bates (2004); cf. Pender (2000), 53–56.

pleasure. At its core, this Platonic image does not pretend to picture ultimate reality, but to be dedicated to the proposition that in the truest reality the gods love *agalmata*, and so we would do well to attend to them as well. Plato could not deny the difficult and unsettling aspects of what some called *eikonologia*, and in the *Symposium* openly adverts to the complexity involved in attempting to put the power of image-making to use for philosophy. But the high conceit advanced in that work, presented in burlesque fashion, is that such makings, however limited, incomplete, or indifferently presented and interpreted, are the worthiest models of excellence and objects of delight that we have.

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The Image of Achilles in Plato's *Symposium*

Elizabeth Belfiore

1 Introduction: Images for Socrates

Alcibiades begins his speech in Plato's *Symposium* by saying that he will praise Socrates 'by means of images [*eikonôn*]' (215a4–5).[1] Socrates is most like, most the image of (*eioikenai*: 215b4), a silenus-figure that opens up to reveal images (*agalmata*) of the gods, or of virtue (215a6–b3, 221d2–222a6), or like the satyr Marsyas (215b3–d1). Socrates, he says, is like Marsyas in form (*eidos*: 215b5), and in other respects, especially in being hybristic (215b6–7). Alcibiades returns to the image of the silenus-statue at the end of his speech, saying that Socrates' words are also most like these statues, for they appear laughable at first, like the skin of an hybristic satyr, but when opened up are found to be most divine, and filled with images (*agalmata*) of virtue (221d7–222a6).

The image of Socrates as satyr has received considerable attention. Another kind of imagery, however, has not been sufficiently studied, that used to characterize Socrates as *unlike* heroic models. The two kind of images are closely related, for Alcibiades says that he must resort to the satyr image because of Socrates' strangeness (*atopia*: 215a2, 221d2).[2] This strangeness makes the usual comparisons to heroic models impossible. 'With a man such as Achilles was', says Alcibiades, 'one might compare [ἀπεικάσειεν] Brasidas, and others, and with such a man as Pericles … one might compare [ἀπεικάζοι] Nestor and Antenor', but Socrates is so strange that he can be compared with no other human, ancient or modern (221c6–d4). The word I have translated as 'compare' is *apeikazein*, literally, 'to make an image', cognate with *eikôn*, 'image', as Brisson's translation nicely brings out: 'de ce que fut Achille on peut trouver une image chez Brasidas'.[3] Thus, what Alcibiades says is that Socrates is *not* the image of anyone else, and, in particular, that he is not the image of Achilles, who is first on Alcibiades' list of heroic figures. Achilles, as he is represented in Homer's *Iliad*, the story of the destructive wrath of this hero (*Iliad* 1.1–2), is not presented in the *Symposium* as a positive model for Socrates, but, instead,

1 This passage is further discussed by Ford, in this volume. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own, and for the *Symposium* I follow the text of Burnet (1901).

2 On Socrates' strangeness and resemblance to a satyr see Belfiore (2012), 161–168, 187–196, with bibliography.

3 Brisson (1998), 175.

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as a negative heroic prototype. That is, Plato's Socrates is an image of Homer's Achilles, not in the way in which a likeness (*eikôn*) resembles its object, but in the way in which a reflection in a mirror resembles the object reflected, with right and left sides reversed. Socrates is the reverse, or mirror-image of Achilles.

2 Mirror Images

Achilles is mentioned by name five times in the *Symposium*: 179e1, 180a4, 180b4, 208d3, and 221c6.[4] The first three mentions occur in the speech of Phaedrus, where Achilles is said to have been honored by the gods for dying in order to 'help' (βοηθήσας: 179e5) his lover Patroclus (179e1–180b5). The fourth mention of Homer's hero appears in Diotima's speech, where his act of dying after Patroclus is given as an example of love of honor (*philotimia*: 208c2–d4), and the fifth mention occurs in Alcibiades' speech, in the passage discussed in the Introduction (221c6–d4). This last passage, in which Alcibiades explicitly states that Socrates is *not* an image of Achilles, invites the audiences, internal and external, to test this statement by comparing (*apeikazein*) for themselves the Socrates of Alcibiades' speech with the figure of Achilles in the other four passages in which the epic hero is mentioned by name. It further encourages them to compare other significant words and actions of Socrates in the *Symposium* with those of Achilles in the *Iliad*.[5]

These comparisons, I contend, reveal that Socrates is indeed *not* an image of Achilles in the sense of a likeness.[6] He is, on the contrary, an Achilles in reverse, whose words and deeds, in similar situations, are just the opposite of those of Achilles. That is, he is a mirror-image of Achilles, in the sense of an image that is

4 According to Brandwood (1976).

5 Labarbe (1987) provides detailed data on some 150 fragments from Homer used in the dialogues that proves how familiar Plato was with Homeric epic (see especially 395–409). Clay (2010) argues that Plato had similar expectations for his readers concerning Homer and other poets: 'when Plato quotes from a poet he often has in mind and expects his readers to have in mind the full context of the passage he quotes' (328). On the extensive knowledge of poetry among educated Greeks of Plato's society see Halliwell (2000), especially 95–96.

6 Important sources for Plato's concept of the image are *Soph.* 236b–c, where he discusses two kinds of image-making (εἰδωλοποιική): likeness-making (εἰκαστική) and appearance-making (φανταστική); *Rep.* x.598–599 on *mimesis* as the making of *eidola*, and 596d–e on *mimesis* as mirror, and *Laws* 2.669a–b. On the terminology (*eikôn, eidolon, phantasma*, etc.) see Patterson (1985), 30–31, "mirror images" in index, and Appendix 2, 171–179, on the views of Allen (1965) and Lee (1966). The concepts of *eikôn* and *phantasma* in *Rep.* and *Soph.* are discussed by Van Riel in this volume.

the reverse of the original. I draw this concept of a mirror-image from a passage in the *Timaeus*. At 46a2–c6 Plato discusses 'the image-making of mirrors' (τὴν τῶν κατόπτρων εἰδωλοποιίαν: 46a3), and describes several 'special cases'.[7] In one case, 'what is left will appear as right', while another kind of mirror 'makes the whole object appear upside down [ὕπτιον], because it bends the lower part of the ray toward the top, and the upper part toward the bottom'.[8] Plato does not, of course, explicitly allude in the *Symposium* to this kind of mirror-image when he writes that Socrates is not an image of anyone else. However, it is a useful tool for interpreting Plato's treatment of Achilles in this dialogue, and in accord with the views of Plato and later writers.[9]

This interpretation of Socrates in the *Symposium* as a mirror-image of Achilles can help us to gain a better understanding of the complexities of Plato's extensive use of Homeric models. Some scholars, noting the passage in the *Apology* (28b–d) in which Socrates compares himself to Achilles, who chose death over dishonor, argue that here, and in other dialogues, Achilles is the heroic model for Socrates.[10] Others, however, contest this view, noting that Achilles' choice of dying to avenge Patroclus is very different from Socrates' choice of death over ceasing to philosophize.[11] These and other differences between Plato's Socrates and Homer's Achilles have led many scholars to argue that, in many dialogues, and especially in the *Republic*, Odysseus rather than Achilles is the heroic model for Socrates.[12] Some scholars argue that, in the *Sym-*

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7 See Taylor (1928), 287–289.

8 *Tim.* 46b–c, trans. Zeyl (1997).

9 Other essays in this volume provide helpful discussions of the variety of ways in which images are related to the objects of which they are images. On images in Plato and later writers that are related by means other than similarity see Edmonds, this volume, section 2, pp. 68–73. In particular, he notes that in *Phaedo* 73d–74a 'visual images provoke recollection in different ways', by things that are unlike as well as by things that are like. Ford argues that 'Plato offers no unified-field theory of imagery' (pp. 11–12), and contrasts Plato's use in the *Symposium* of two terms that can both be translated as 'image'—*eikôn* and *agalma*—but that have different connotations with respect to their 'likeness' to an original (pp. 22–27). And van Riel discusses the role of perspective in the creation of images that appear deformed when seen from one angle, but beautiful when viewed from another (pp. 107–108, 112).

10 See, for example, Altman (2012), 382–399, Barrett (2001), Euben (1990), 218–226, Holway (1994), Metcalf (2009).

11 On the differences see especially Hobbs (2000), 178–186.

12 See, among many others, Benardete (1963), Bloom (1968), 427–436, Charalabopoulos (2012), 79–80, Howland (1993), 47–54, Klonoski (1993), Lévystone (2005), Montiglio (2011), 47–57, Planinc (2003) and (2004), Voegelin (1957), 52–54.

posium also, Odysseus is presented as a model for Socrates. According to Stanley Rosen: 'With some slight variation, Odysseus is represented in the *Symposium* by Socrates, as Plato makes explicit by a number of important references. On the other hand, there is no direct parallel to Achilles, but only a series of partial caricatures'.[13] Unlike Rosen, I hold that Achilles, who is directly referred to a number of times, is more significant for an understanding of Socrates than is Odysseus, who is never mentioned by name. However, neither Achilles nor any other Homeric hero, is presented as a positive model for Socrates, who, as Alcibiades says, cannot be compared with any other human (221c6–d4).[14]

Instead, Socrates, in this dialogue, can be seen as the kind of mirror-image discussed above, as the reverse of the Achilles of the *Symposium* and of Homer's *Iliad*, in several specific respects. First (Section 3), Socrates, like Achilles, withdraws from society on occasion. He does so, however, for the purpose of philosophical contemplation, in contrast to Achilles' destructive wrath. Second (Section 4), he is the reverse of Achilles in the literal sense of being characterized by an opposite kind of physical posture. Third (Section 5), he is a mirror-image of Achilles in exhibiting a very different, and nobler, kind of courage. Fourth (Section 6), Socrates' inner beauty, combined with outer ugliness, is the reverse of Achilles' beauty of form concealing inner inadequacy. I conclude (Section 7), by contrasting the final image of Socrates in the *Symposium*, as he rises and walks away, with the image of Achilles in the *Iliad*, who is last seen sleeping. Thus, I argue that Socrates is the mirror-image of Achilles both in visible characteristics, such as physical posture and movements, and with regard to inner qualities, such as goals, courage, and beauty of soul.

3 Withdrawals

From the very beginning of Aristodemus's narrative, the *Symposium* sets the stage for this kind of comparison between Socrates and Achilles. In his preliminary talk with Aristodemus, whom he asks to accompany him uninvited to Agathon's feast, Socrates says that Homer did hybris to the proverb that 'the good go of their own accord to the banquets of the good' (174b3–6).[15] In quoting

13 Rosen (1987), 6. On Odysseus as model in *Symp.* see also Benardete (1963), 178, Montiglio (2011), 52–55, Planinc (2004), Steel (2004).

14 Blondell (2002), 160, citing this passage, rightly notes that '[w]e … do not receive, and should not expect, a coherent preference for any single Homeric hero'.

15 On the proverb, and the text and interpretation of the *Symp.* passage see Bury (1932), on 174b, Dover (1980), on 174b3, Labarbe (1987), 312–313, Rowe (1998), on 174b3–c5.

the proverb, Socrates adapts *Iliad* 2.408, in which Menelaos goes uninvited to a feast given by Agamemnon.[16] Achilles misses this feast because it occurs after his withdrawal. This allusion to the *Iliad*, and the following discussion about Homer's use of the proverb, set up a comparison and competition between Socrates and Homer. It also prepares the audience to see the subsequent narration of Socrates' withdrawal into a neighbor's porch, in order to think about something within himself (174d4–175c6), as a kind of comic parody, or distorted fun-house mirror-image, of Achilles' withdrawal from war. Because of his anger, Achilles misses not only the feast, but also the battle in which Patroclus is killed. In contrast, Socrates withdraws for only a short time, not in anger, and returns in the middle of the feast, and in time for the 'battle' of words that begins with his first conversation with Agathon (175c6–e10). Just as Achilles rejects the pleas of the Embassy in *Iliad* 9, so Socrates, in a comic reversal, rejects the request of the slave sent by Agathon to ask him to come to dinner (175a3–9). The slave says that Socrates has 'withdrawn', literally, 'gone back' (ἀναχωρήσας) into the neighbors' porch, and is standing (ἕστηκεν) there (175a8), and Aristodemus uses the term 'standing apart' (ἀποστάς: 175b2) to describe the philosopher's action. These terms, designating the philosopher's upright stance, contrast with the terms used to refer to Achilles' seated or lying posture after his withdrawal from battle.[17] The differences between the two men are highlighted by the fact that instead of anger, Socrates' withdrawal leads to the laughter Aristodemus arouses when he arrives alone, as an uninvited guest (174e2). Socrates' behavior in this opening episode is the same as his behavior in Alcibiades' speech. The philosopher *stands* (ἕστηκεν: 175a8, b2) and thinks.

4 Posture

In two passages that frame Alcibiades' account of how Socrates' courageous actions saved his life in battle at Potidaea (220d5–e7), Alcibiades describes the philosopher's characteristic posture and gait. Socrates is noteworthy for his upright stance and confident way of moving, in contrast to the posture of Homer's Achilles, who notoriously sits and lies on the ground after his withdrawal from war, and the death of Patroclus in which it results. In this case, Socrates is the kind of mirror-image that 'makes the whole object appear upside

16 See Labarbe (1987) 313.

17 See below, Section 4.

down [ὕπτιον]', or rather, it is Achilles who is seen to be 'upside down', that is, 'lying on his back' (the Greek term ὕπτιος used at *Iliad* 24.11 means both), when compared with the upright Socrates.

In the first framing passage (220c2–d5), Alcibiades discusses Socrates' endurance (*karteria*) while the army is camped in the field. He begins by quoting from the *Odyssey*: 'Here is a task such as that strong [*karteros*] man endured and accomplished'.[18] In this passage, Odysseus, whose exploit in entering Troy disguised as a beggar is introduced by the quoted line, has been seen as a positive heroic model for Socrates.[19] Socrates, however, unlike Homer's Odysseus, shows his endurance by standing upright for a day and a night, while he considers and searches for something within himself. He does so not in disguise, but in full view of all of his fellow soldiers, who marvel at and discuss him among themselves, and even sleep outdoors to see if he will continue to stand all night (220c5–d3). Plato's audience would be likely to recognize the source of Plato's quotation and think of Odysseus, even though this hero is not named. Odysseus is indeed well-known for his endurance. However, Achilles, with whom Alcibiades will explicitly deny that Socrates can be compared (221c6–d6), is a more relevant figure in this context than is Odysseus. In Homer's poem, after the quarrel with Agamemnon and his withdrawal from war, Achilles is frequently represented as sitting idle, or as lying down.[20] In a famous description of Achilles' grief for Patroclus, Achilles lies in the dust: 'And he himself, mightily in his might, in the dust lay/ at length' (*Iliad* 18.26–27: Lattimore).[21] When Achilles finally rises, at 18.203, this marks the end of his withdrawal.[22]

In contrast to the grieving Achilles' passive, prone position, Socrates' upright stance emphasizes his active engagement in philosophical concentration. Al-

18 *Ody.* 4.242, trans. Lattimore (1967).

19 Socrates is compared to the Odysseus of the quotation by Benardete (1963), 178 and Montiglio (2011), 53–55.

20 Sitting idle (ἧμαι): 1.330, 1.416, 1.421, 1.489, 18.104, 19.345, 24.542; ἕζετο: 1.349. See Edwards 1991, on 18.104; Macleod 1982, on 24.542; Richardson 1993, on 24.540–542. Lying down: 2.688, 2.694, 2.772, 18.26–27, 19.4, 24.10–11. On Achilles's reclining posture see Nikolopoulou 2007, especially 185–190.

21 αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κονίῃσι μέγας μεγαλωστὶ τανυσθεὶς/ κεῖτο. The phrase is also used of Achilles in *Ody.* 24.39–40 (in Hades): 'and you in the dust turning lay/mightily in your might' (trans. Lattimore): σὺ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κονίης/ κεῖσο μέγας μαγαλωστί. See Edwards (1991), on *Il.* 18.26–27, who also notes that 'the couplet is appropriate and effective, not only describing the hero's grief but also suggesting his own death, which the conclusion of the scene will make both certain and imminent'.

22 Edwards (1991), on *Il.* 18.203–206.

cibiades' emphasis in the passage about Socrates' endurance while camped in the field is on the fact that Socrates *stands* while thinking about something: 'From dawn *he stood* [εἱστήκει] considering something … *he stood* [εἱστήκει] searching … *he stood* [ἕστηκε] thinking … they watched to see if he *would stand* [ἑστήξοι] all night … *he stood* [εἱστήκει] until dawn' (220c3–d4). Cognates of the verb ἵστημι (to stand) occur five times in ten lines. Socrates' fellow soldiers at Potidaea marvel at him (θαυμάζοντες: 220c6), but Alcibiades' audience, and Plato's, would have been familiar with this habit (discussed above, Section 3). On his way to Agathon's symposium, Socrates withdraws in order to think about something (174d5), and he remains standing (ἕστηκεν: 175a8) in a neighbor's porch while Aristodemus goes on without him. When Agathon tells his slave to call Socrates and not let him go, Aristodemus says to let him be: 'This is his custom [ἔθος]. Sometimes he withdraws wherever he happens to be, and stands [ἕστηκεν]. He'll come soon' (175b1–3).

In the second passage that frames Alcibiades' account of how Socrates saved his life, Alcibiades describes Socrates' bravery in the retreat at Delium, again referring to the philosopher's upright and confident physical posture. Socrates moved 'swaggering and casting his eyes about' (βρενθυόμενος καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ παραβάλων: an adaptation of Aristophanes, *Clouds* 262), and he walked 'calmly glancing sidelong at both friends and enemies' (ἠρέμα παρασκοπῶν καὶ τοὺς φιλίους καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους), making it clear that he would strongly defend himself if attacked. In this way, Alcibiades says, both Socrates and Alcibiades went away in safety (221b1–c1).

The idea that Socrates' posture and gait in the *Symposium* can be seen as contrasting with those of Homer's Achilles is supported by evidence from other dialogues. In *Republic* III. 388a5–b1 Socrates states:

> We will beg Homer and the other poets not to make Achilles, the son of a goddess
>
> > lying now on his side, and now again
> > on his back, and now prone on his face
>
> And then, standing upright
>
> > sailing distraught by the shore of the barren sea.[23]

23 ἄλλοτ' ἐπὶ πλευρᾶς κατακείμενον, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε/ὕπτιον, ἄλλοτε δὲ πρηνῆ,/ τοτὲ δ' ὀρθὸς ἀναστάντα/πλῴζοντ' ἀλύοντ' ἐπὶ θῖν' ἁλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο. Socrates' quotation is

In *Republic* X, Socrates argues in favor of *mimesis* of the 'sensible and calm [ἡσύχιον] character, always nearly alike itself to itself', as opposed to that of the 'complaining and varied character' (604e1–3), and he specifically criticizes Homer's portrayal of heroes who wail and beat their breasts in grief (605c–d). Achilles' actions and postures in the *Iliad* mark him as having the inferior, 'complaining and variegated' character, while those of Plato's Socrates, in the *Symposium* and other dialogues, show that he has the opposing 'sensible and calm' character. In this way also, then, Socrates is the mirror-image of Achilles.

In the *Apology*, Socrates compares himself to Achilles, using Homer's hero as a positive example, not in every respect, but only in the limited case of someone who prefers death to doing something shameful (28b3–d5).[24] However, Socrates also represents himself as the reverse of this sitting or lying hero, who is 'a weight on the earth' (28d4).[25] The philosopher is remarkably active in this dialogue. The accusation against him (19b5) is that he goes about doing too much (περιεργάζεται) (cf. 20c6–7: περιττότερον πραγματευομένου), in his searches. His search is something that requires him to go about (ἰτέον): 21e5, engaging in wanderings (πλάνην): 22a7. These purposeful wanderings contrast vividly with the distraught driftings of the Achilles of *Iliad* 24. The Socrates of the *Apology*, unlike Achilles in the *Iliad*, goes about seeking (23b5: περιιὼν ζητῶ), and has no leisure: (23b8: ἀσχολίας). He goes around (περιέρχομαι) persuading people to take care of their souls (30a8). The gadfly image of Socrates is an especially delightful contrast to the prostrate figure of Achilles lying in the dust, stretched out mightily in his might (18.26–27, quoted above). Like this insect, Socrates is constantly engaged in his characteristic activity of stirring people up. He never stops the whole day long, settling down everywhere (30e2–31a2); he approaches (προσιόντα) each person (31b4), and goes around meddling (περιιὼν καὶ πολυπραγμονῶ): 31c5.

adapted from *Il.* 24.10–12. I cite and translate the text of Slings (2003). On the text see Adam (1963), ad loc, Labarbe (1987), 283–289.

24 See Blondell (2002), 160, on Plato selective use of ancient texts.

25 For *Apology* I follow the text of Duke et al. (1995). Socrates quotes *Il.* 18.104, in which Achilles calls himself a 'useless weight on the earth' (ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης), but he omits the word 'useless' (ἐτώσιον). Labarbe (1987), 340–342, lists this omission as an example of a paraphrase and confused memory. According to Benardete (1963), 173–174, however, the omission is deliberate. Socrates represses Achilles' word 'useless' (ἐτώσιον) because of the following lines in which Achilles explains why he is a vain burden on earth: I am a warrior; others are better in council. But Socrates is excellent in speaking and would show his idleness in not questioning people. On this passage see further below, Section 6.

5 Courage

The differences in posture of Socrates and Achilles are directly connected with the very different kinds of courage that the two men exhibit. Alcibiades' mention of Achilles (221c6) appears shortly after the young man's praise of Socrates' behavior in battle and other military situations.[26] At Potidaea, says Alcibiades, Socrates not only saved Alcibiades' life and his weapons, but refused to accept the prize for valor that Socrates deserved (220d5–e6). Socrates' actions thus contrast favorably with those of Achilles, as this hero is represented in the speeches of Phaedrus and Diotima. According to Phaedrus, Achilles, the son of Thetis (179e1), who is not the lover but the beloved of Patroclus (180a4–7), is honored by the gods because he helped (βοηθήσας) Patroclus, and did not merely die for him (ὑπεραποθανεῖν), but actually died in addition to him (ἐπαποθανεῖν) (179e1–180a2). Diotima uses the same word 'to die in addition' (ἐπαποθανεῖν), in saying that love of honor, *philotimia*, led Achilles to die in addition to Patroclus (208c1–d6). Achilles may have been courageous in avenging his lover, but the reference to the death of Patroclus could not have failed to remind the audience of the darker side of this story. In the *Iliad*, of course, Achilles 'dies in addition' to Patroclus because he withdraws in wrath and thus does not save either his friend or his friend's weapons (which are, indeed, Achilles' own). Instead of helping the living Patroclus, Achilles withdraws from battle and allows his friend to fight alone, dressed in Achilles' armor. Achilles regrets this failure to help Patroclus so much that, after lying prone in the dust in mourning (*Iliad* 18.26–27: quoted above, Section 4), he speaks of his own death:

> 'I must die soon, then; since I was not to stand by my companion
> when he was killed. And now, far away from the land of his fathers,
> he has perished, and lacked my fighting strength to defend him.
> Now, since I am not going back to the beloved land of my fathers,
> since I was no light of safety to Patroklos, nor to my other
> companions, who in their numbers went down before glorious Hector,
> but sit here beside my ships, a useless weight on the good land,
> I who am such as no other of the bronze-armoured Achaians
> in battle, though there are others also better in council—'
>
> 18.98–106: LATTIMORE

26 On Socrates' courage see Yonezawa (2012).

The courage of Achilles in the *Iliad*, then, differs from that of Socrates in that it leads to disaster, since it lacks wisdom ('there are others also better in council'), and therefore can lead him to act in destructive ways, and, according to Diotima, it is directed toward *philotimia*. In contrast, Socrates' courage, according to Alcibiades, is combined with wisdom and the other virtues, and he is so lacking in love of honor that he refuses the prize for valor that he deserves. According to Alcibiades, Socrates possesses moderation (*sophrosynê*), courage, wisdom (*phronêsis*) and endurance (*karteria*) (219d5–7).[27] Socrates' wisdom leads Alcibiades to call him the best helper one could have in becoming as good as possible (*Symposium* 218d1–3). Far from helping others in this way, Achilles' lack of wisdom destroys his companions and himself. Socrates' endurance, according to Alcibiades, shows itself in his resistance to pleasure and pain. He resists the effects of wine (220a4–6), the need for sleep (when, for example, he stands thinking for a day and a night: 220c3–d5), the temptations of money (219e1–2), and the effects of hunger (219e8–220a1) and cold (220a6–c1). In contrast, Homer's Achilles shows folly rather than endurance when he refuses the food and drink that are necessary to sustain his physical powers.[28]

According to Alcibiades, Socrates' *sophrosynê* shows itself in particular in his resistance to sexual pleasure, in the form of enjoyment of Alcibiades' beautiful body (219b3–d2). However, the philosopher's sound-mindedness or self-control or moderation (however we interpret *sophrosynê*) is also evident in the examples Alcibiades gives of his *karteria*, resistance to pleasures and pains of all kinds. Socrates' endurance and moderation contrast sharply with the characteristics of Homer's Achilles. It is noteworthy that in the *Republic* Socrates criticizes Homer for representing 'Achilles, son of a goddess and of Peleus, who was the most moderate (σωφρονεστάτου) of men and third from Zeus,' as having 'two diseases ... illiberality together with love of money, and arrogance towards gods and humans' (*Republic* III 391c1–6).[29] In the *Iliad*, the term *sophrosynê* and cognates are not used of Achilles, but he is represented as having a defect similar to the later concept of lack of *sophrosynê*: inability to control his anger (*thumos*). In the speech he attributes to Peleus in *Iliad* 9, Odysseus contrasts the god-given strength (*kartos*), that Achilles possesses, with human responsibility for restraining the thumos (θυμὸν ἴσχειν) and having regard for others (φιλοφροσύνη: 254–256). Phoinix also asks Achilles to "conquer your *thumos*"

27 See Belfiore (2012), 179–180.

28 In the *Iliad* (19.145–356) Achilles refuses food and drink after the death of Patroclus and must be given ambrosia and nectar by the gods so that he won't be weakened by hunger.

29 On Socrates' criticisms of Achilles in *Rep.* see Blondell (2002), 157, Hobbs (2000), 199–219, Metcalf (2009), 64, Murray (2011), 180–184, Tarrant (1951), 60.

(δάμασον θυμόν: 496). In the *Symposium*, Socrates is not explicitly characterized as restraining his *thumos*. He does, however, possess the character-traits of the *praos*, the 'gentle-tempered' person. According to Kostas Kalimtzis, the best example of this person is Socrates in the trial and death scenes.[30] In the *Phaedo*, Kalimtzis notes, Socrates 'shows no anger towards the jailer', for whom he 'has kind and gentle words', and he 'is master of his pleasures and pains'. During his trial in the *Apology*, Socrates is also gentle towards the judges, 'declaring that he is defending himself for *their* benefit so that they may not commit an injustice'.[31] Socrates has these same character traits in the *Symposium*, in that he always tries to benefit others, is master of his pleasures and pains, and is never angry.

Socrates' courage, then, differs from that of Achilles in that it is combined with wisdom and the other virtues. This kind of courage enables Socrates to save his own life and that of his companion. Achilles' courage, however, leads to the opposite result: disaster for himself and his friends. Unlike the Achilles who rolls in the dust and wishes for death, the upright Socrates has nothing to regret. Because their two kinds of courage have opposing results, Socrates' courage can be seen as the mirror-image of that of Achilles. The two kinds of courage are also opposed to one another in having opposite motivations. Achilles' courage in dying after Patroclus is motivated by *philotimia*, love of honor, by means of which he hopes to achieve the 'immortal memory of virtue … which we now have' (208c2–d6). The audience at the symposium would have remembered that in Diotima's speech *philotimia* belongs to the Lesser Mysteries (208c1–210a1), while the initiate into the Higher Mysteries (210a1–2) is motivated instead by love of divine beauty (211e3). What he strives to give birth to is *not* an image (*eidolon*) of virtue (*aretê*), but the truth (212a3–5). Whether or not Socrates himself is represented as having actually succeeded in reaching the top of the Ladder of Love,[32] his statement that he has been persuaded by Diotima (212b1–4) suggests that he, like Eros in her speech, loves and searches for this divine beauty rather than being motivated by love of the kind of honor that is conferred by mortals.

Indeed, Eros in Diotima's myth is courageous and bold in seeking after beauty (203d4–8). He is a philosopher who knows that he lacks, and as a result, searches for the (divine) wisdom (*sophia*) that is among the most beautiful things (204b1–5). Socrates also has these qualities, and resembles Eros in many

30 Kalimtzis (2012), 53. For the translation 'gentle-tempered' see p. 49.

31 Kalimtzis (2012), 53–54. Cf. Harris (2001), 355, who notes that in the *Phaedo* Socrates 'controls his anger, or rather shuns anger altogether'.

32 Opinions about this matter vary: see Belfiore (2012), 143–144.

other ways as well. When Alcibiades calls him 'a truly daimonic and marvelous man' (219c1), the audience is reminded of Eros the *daimôn* in Diotima's speech. This *daimôn* is a being neither mortal nor divine, but in between both (202d11–e1), the son of Poverty (Penia) and Resource (Poros) (203b1–c6). He has, however, enormous power, binding together mortals and gods (202e3–203a8). Like Eros, Socrates uses his daimonic qualities to help others, by mediating between divine and human, and leading humans to love the divine. As 'the son of Thetis' (179e1), Achilles is also of mixed parentage, son of a goddess and a mortal.[33] In contrast to Socrates, however, Achilles does not benefit either himself or others as a result of his mixed parentage, but says that he wishes Peleus had never married Thetis, that is, he wishes he had never been born (*Iliad* 18.84–87).

6 Beauty

Alcibiades' Socrates is the reverse of Achilles in a still another physical respect. According to Phaedrus, Achilles was the most beautiful of the heroes, and also so young that he did not yet have a beard (180a4–7). Socrates, in contrast, is an older man who is the image (*eikôn*: 215a6, cf. *eoikenai*: 215b4, *eoikas*: 215b6; *apeikazoi*: 221d1, d4) of an ugly silen or satyr (215a4–d1; 221d7–e4). He is, however, the image of a satyr or silen only in his outer form (*schema*: 216d4). When he is 'opened up' he can be seen to contain other images (*agalmata*). These are images of gods (215b3), and of virtue (222a4), that are 'divine and golden and very beautiful and marvelous' (216e7–217a1). 'You must see in me', Socrates tells Alcibiades in the seduction scene, 'some inconceivable beauty, and very different from your own beauty of form' if you want to get the better of me by exchanging the one for the other (218e2–219a1). Although Socrates warns Alcibiades that he may be mistaken (219a1–4), Alcibiades clearly has not changed his mind by the time of his speech, when he speaks of the 'very beautiful' *agalmata* inside Socrates.

This idea, in Alcibiades' 'image' of Socrates, of the contrast between outer ugliness and inner beauty is connected with the final theme of Alcibiades' speech. Socrates, Alcibiades says, deceives people into thinking that he is the lover, while actually turning out to be the beloved (222b3–4). This statement is corroborated by the narrator, Aristodemus, who says that Alcibiades' speech raised a laugh, for Alcibiades seemed to be still in love with Socrates (222c1–3). The ambiguity about the role of Socrates in love relationships recalls Phae-

33 Socrates as *daimôn*: Belfiore (2012), 187–196, Socrates and Achilles: Clay (1972).

drus's speech, according to which the nature of the love-relationship between Achilles and Patroclus was also disputed. According to Phaedrus, Aeschylus speaks nonsense in representing Achilles as the lover of Patroclus. Achilles is of course the beloved, because, as Homer says, he is young and the most beautiful of the heroes (180a4–7). Once again, Alcibiades' audience would have been led to contrast the physical beauty of Achilles with the beauty of soul of Socrates.

Socrates is an object of love because, as Alcibiades tells him in the seduction scene, 'Nothing is more important to me than becoming as good a person as possible, and I don't think anyone can help me more effectively than you can in reaching this aim'.[34] Socrates replies: '[i]f indeed what you say about me is actually true, and there is in me some power which could make you a better man; it'd be an irresistible beauty that you were observing in me'.[35] According to Alcibiades, then, Socrates has a kind of beauty that is supremely valuable and useful. In contrast, after the death of Patroclus, whose death he failed to prevent, Homer's Achilles calls himself 'a useless weight on the earth' (*Iliad* 18.104).[36] He is like a weapon thrown in vain (ἐτώσιον).[37] Moreover, just before he makes this statement, Achilles spoils his beautiful form in grief, in a passage adapted by Socrates in his criticisms of Homer in *Republic* III:

> In both hands he caught up the grimy dust, and poured it
> over his head and face, and fouled his handsome countenance,
> and the black ashes were scattered over his immortal tunic.
> And he himself, mightily in his might, in the dust lay
> at length, and took and tore at his hair with his hands, and defiled it.[38]

In defiling his outer beauty and lying 'mightily in his might' in the dust [μέγας μεγαλωστὶ τανυσθεὶς], Achilles enacts his own death.[39] Indeed, having failed to

34 218d1–3: trans. Gill (1999).

35 218d8–e2: trans. Rowe (1998).

36 On this passage and *Ap.* 28b–d see above, Section 4, with note 24.

37 For this sense of ἐτώσιον see Arieti (1985), 197–198.

38 *Il.* 18.23–27: Lattimore. The first two lines are adapted by Socrates in his criticism of Homer in *Rep.* III, 388b2–3.

39 On the function of Patroclus as the 'epic surrogate of Achilles' see Nagy (1979), 292–293, citing Whitman (1958), 199–203. Whitman notes that '[t]he death of Patroclus is a shadow play of the death of Achilles' (201), and that the phrase μέγας μεγαλωστὶ τανυσθεὶς (stretched out mightily in his might) is 'generally reserved for the dead' (202). Specific references to this use of the phrase are given by Edwards (1991), on 18.26–27. Edwards also

help Patroclus and his other companions (18.80–82, 98–104), Achilles expresses a wish that he had never been born, telling Thetis that he wishes she had never married Peleus (18.86–87).

In direct reversal of this scene in which Achilles lies prone and defiles his own beauty, the story of Aristodemus begins by calling attention to Socrates' unusual efforts to make himself physically beautiful, and his purposeful forward motion. Aristodemus asks Socrates, who has bathed and is shod, where he is going (ἴοι), having become so beautiful. Socrates replies, 'I beautified myself [ἐκαλλωπισάμην], so that I might go, a beautiful man to a beautiful man [καλὸς παρὰ καλὸν ἴω]' (174a3–9).[40] The contrast between the prone and soiled Achilles and the beautified and active Socrates occurs in the context of the explicit allusion to and correction of Homer's *Iliad*, discussed above (Section 3). As Pierre Destrée points out, there is a pun on two senses of 'beautiful' (*kalos*) here: good looking and the sexually attractive beloved (*eromenos*).[41] The contrast between Socrates and Achilles is heightened by this joke.

7 Final Images

Just as the dialogue opens with the contrasting withdrawals of Achilles and Socrates (above, Section 3), so it closes with two opposing final images of the two men. Achilles' last action in *Iliad* 24 is to agree with Priam to allow a truce for the burial of Hector. After Achilles grasps the old man's hand, Priam sleeps in the porch, while Achilles sleeps in a corner of his shelter, with Briseis beside him (24.668–676.) 'Achilles slept' (Αχιλλεὺς εὗδε: 675) is the last we hear of the hero of the *Iliad*. Socrates' actions at the end of the *Symposium* are the mirror-image of those of Achilles. After the other symposiasts either depart or fall asleep, Socrates does not make a truce, but wins an argument about tragedy and comedy with Agathon and Aristophanes, who are so sleepy that they barely follow what he is saying. Both fall asleep, and Socrates puts them to bed (223b6–d9). Far from falling asleep himself, Socrates stands up and goes away (ἀναστάντα ἀπιέναι: 223d9), and, after spending the day just as he always does, rests at home (223d10–12).

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writes that '[t]he presence of the lamenting women also suggests that Akhilleus is lying not in grief, but in death' (on 18.22–31).

40 Verbs meaning 'to go' occur frequently in this passage. Forms of εἶμι occur at 174b1, b4, c7, d4, d7; cf. forms of ἔρχομαι at 174c3, d2.

41 Destrée (2015), 363.

This passage contains no quotations from Homer, and, as far as I know, scholars have not noted this contrast between Socrates and Achilles. In some respects, Socrates' actions, especially his return home, recall those of Odysseus. Indeed, Socrates' endurance (*karteria*) in war expeditions includes his ability to stay awake all night, standing and thinking, in a passage introduced by a quotation from the *Odyssey* describing Odysseus' behavior in Troy (220c1–d5).[42] However, as noted above, the differences between Socrates and Odysseus in the passage are striking, and Odysseus should not be seen as a model for Socrates. Given the previous mentions of Achilles in the *Symposium*, and the other contrasts I have noted, Plato's contemporary audience would have been at least equally likely to think of Achilles' sleep at the end of the *Iliad*.

The dialogue ends, then, with a final image of Socrates that is the reverse of the final image of Achilles in the *Iliad*: Achilles lies in a sleep that prefigures his death; Socrates is awake and standing, engaging in the customary activities of his life. It enriches our reading of Plato's many-faceted and complex text to see Socrates, in this passage as in others, as the philosophical mirror-image of the epic hero. As Stephen Halliwell puts it: 'Plato's own engagement with poetry is unending … [his] writing constantly responds to and lives with it on every level … [and his] own dialogues, like the persona of Socrates at *Republic* 608a, "continue to listen" to the voices of poetry, if always against the background of protective philosophical incantations. As such, they call for readers who will somehow be prepared to do the same'.[43]

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42 See above, Section 4.

43 Halliwell (2011), 204.

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The Power and Ambivalence of a Beautiful Image in Plato and the Poets

Francisco Gonzalez

It is increasingly recognized in the literature that Plato's critique of the poets for their use of images in no way implies that philosophy can dispense with images. How, after all, could one fail to note that even the Platonic dialogue most unsparingly critical of imitation is not only itself a work of imitation but accomplishes its central philosophical work through images (think of the Sun and the Cave)? The starting point of any discussion of the topic must be the fact that Plato's relation to images, and thus also to the poets in whom he sees the manipulators of images, is deeply ambivalent. What I wish to show is that this ambivalence is rooted in the ambivalence that characterizes images themselves on Plato's account, an ambivalence that especially comes to the fore in the *beautiful* image. Such an image is ambivalent in that by its very nature it both produces satisfaction with itself, is desirable in itself, and points beyond itself, leaving one unsatisfied.

In examining this ambivalence I will focus on three texts: 1) *The critique of the Lovers of Sights and Sounds in Republic V*. It is often forgotten that the reason why a critique of the Lovers of Sights and Sounds is needed at this point of the text is that they so much *resemble* philosophers. The reason is that philosophers themselves are enamored of beautiful sights and sounds. The difference is that philosophers are 'awake' to the distinction between these images and the original beauty itself of which they are images. But this does not mean, as the subsequent course of the dialogue shows, that philosophers can 'wake up' to the extent of no longer being attracted to images and being able to dispense with them altogether. Philosophers never entirely cease being lovers of sights and sounds and must constantly fight the danger of becoming no more than that. 2) *The role of beauty in the Phaedrus*. This text shows how the attraction to beautiful images, far from being a mere hindrance to philosophy, as a hasty reading of the *Republic* might suggest, can provide its indispensable impetus. Even if part of us is satisfied with a beautiful image and seeks its mere possession, another part of us can be attracted to it in such a way as to be led beyond it to the original of which it is an image. The image is here transformed from a barrier between the sensible and the intelligible into a bridge. 3) *The contest between Agathon and Socrates in the Symposium*. Agathon is often dismissed as a mere pretty boy capable of no

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more than creating beautiful and superficial images through his rhetoric. Yet the importance Socrates himself grants Agathon in the dialogue and the fact that Agathon is acknowledged as his closest rival suggests what the content of Socrates' own speech confirms: that beautiful images of the type valued by Agathon in his own person and in his poetry are essential steps in the ascent towards Beauty Itself. Agathon the poet and Socrates the philosopher emerge as the closest of kin. The difference is only that Socrates is dissatisfied where Agathon is satisfied, that Socrates finds himself lacking where Agathon feels fulfilled. Ironically, if Agathon is not as good and beautiful as he thinks, this is because he does not feel himself to be *lacking* beauty and goodness. The beautiful image can be more than an image only when it ceases to satisfy. In the end it is an emphasis on the 'erotic' character of images, and thus on their ambivalence between possessing and lacking that of which they are the images, that distinguishes the philosopher from the poet.

1 Why the Philosopher Looks Like a Lover of Sights and Sounds

In turning to the *Republic*, the first thing to note is that it is Glaucon who considers it strange to characterize the lovers of sights and sounds as philosophers. Socrates in response agrees that they are different, but also insists that they are similar (*all'homoious men philosophois*, 475e2). What, then, is the similarity? It is presumably that they are both 'lovers of spectacles' and allow for no limits or exceptions to their love for their object.[1] What indeed provokes Glaucon's objection is Socrates' characterization of *the philosopher* as someone 'who's readily willing to taste everything learnable (*pantos mathêmatos geuesthai*) and goes towards learning gladly and in an insatiable spirit' (475c6–8). The distinction Socrates then proceeds to make is that while the lovers of sights and sounds indeed love *all beautiful* objects, only the philosopher can know and love the one form of beauty itself. Yet this important distinction does not retract the earlier characterization of the philosopher that made him or her similar to the lovers of sights and sounds in the first place: the philosopher too, as someone eager to taste everything learnable, loves all beautiful sights and sounds.[2]

1 As Nightingale (2004), 78, notes, the dramatic occasion for the discussion narrated in the *Republic* is the love of sights and sounds at the festival of Bendis to which Socrates' friends invite him. But as Nightingale also notes, the discussion in which Socrates engages his friends comes to supplant the *theôria* of the festival with a new *theôria*.

2 Nightingale (2004), 78, insists that the philosopher is a lover of sights *rather than* a lover of sounds. But while Socrates does tend to describe *theôria* in terms of seeing rather than

The second point to note is that according to Socrates' explicit observation and Glaucon's emphatic agreement, only very few are capable of contemplating beauty in and by itself (476b9–10). We must wonder if this is not an understatement. Does even Socrates have this ability? And, more importantly, if he does not, does that make him a lover of sights and sounds? Socrates proceeds to characterize the lovers of sights and sounds as 'dreaming' in the sense that they take what resembles beauty to be beauty itself, while the philosophers in contrast are awake to the difference. But here we must ask: does being awake to the difference require the grasp of the form in itself and by itself? Must one know the form of the Good in itself and by itself in order to recognize that there is a difference between it and the good things that are images of it?

Here we need to consider carefully how Socrates defines the two states in question. Dreaming is believing that 'a likeness to something is not a likeness but is the thing itself to which it is similar' (476c4–5).[3] Being awake, in contrast, is 'believing that there is a beautiful itself and being able to see both it and the things participating in it (*dunamenos kathoran kai auto kai ta ekeinou metechonta*), and not believing that the things participating in it are it itself or that it itself is the things participating in it' (476c7–d1). According to these definitions, the distinction between the beautiful likeness and the beautiful itself that distinguishes waking from dreaming requires not only *believing that* there is a beautiful itself, but also *seeing* both it and the things participating in it. But exactly what kind of seeing is this? Does it involve knowledge of the form in question?

If we look to Socrates' own example, distinguishing between a form and the things participating in it does not appear to require *knowledge* of the form. In book 6 he will speak of the good itself through its images while both keeping the good itself distinct from its images and disavowing knowledge of it. Responding to Glaucon's request that he state what he thinks the good is, Socrates claims that it is not just to speak of things one doesn't know as if one knew them (506c2–3) and that opinions without knowledge are ugly (506c6–7). Socrates then proposes the following: 'But you, blessed fellows, let's leave aside for the time being what the good itself is, since it appears to me to be beyond the trajectory of the impulse we've got at present to reach the things that now seem to me to be the case (*tou ge dokountos emoi ta nun*).

hearing, we should not forget that Socrates is a lover of *logoi* and that the 'feast' with which he entertains his friends in the *Republic* and that supplants the *theôria* at the festival of Bendis is, as Nightingale herself notes (76), a feast *of words* (354a–b), even if it employs many *verbal* images.

3 τὸ ὅμοιόν τῳ μὴ ὅμοιον ἀλλ' αὐτὸ ἡγῆται εἶναι ᾧ ἔοικεν.

But I'm willing to speak about what appears to be an offspring of the good and most like it (*homoiotatos*), if that's also congenial to you folks, or if not, to let it go' (506d7–e3; Sachs trans.). Do we not have something here between knowledge of the good itself and the inability to distinguish the good itself from its images? Indeed, to use Socrates' own metaphor, isn't there something between dreaming and being fully awake, such as dreaming while recognizing you are in a dream or only gradually waking up?

When Socrates proceeds in Book 5 to equate 'dreaming' with opinion and 'being awake' with knowledge, we should recall that in Book 6 we will learn that there is a state between opinion and knowledge, what Socrates will call there *dianoia*, that, while making use of images in reasoning about the forms, is aware that the images are not the forms: 'Then you also know that they make additional use of visible forms, and make their arguments about them, even though they're thinking not about these but about those things these are images of' (510d).[4] Those practicing dianoia as thus described would presumably be especially hard to distinguish from the lovers of sights and sounds. They do not give an account of the forms themselves and only *seek to see them* (*zêtountes te auta ekeina idein*, 511a1) by way of their images.

We should recall that Socrates himself makes such extensive use of images in this very dialogue that he is mistaken for someone infatuated with images. When Socrates claims that he requires an image to explain the condition of philosophers in present-day society, Adeimantus retorts with sarcasm and doubtless some exasperation, 'And it is not your habit, Socrates, to speak in images!' (*di'eikonôn legein*, 487e6) Socrates' response, furthermore, is to say that he will present his image (which is that of the ill-governed ship) so that Adeimantus may see even more 'how greedy I am in my imagery' (*hôs glischrôs eikazô*, 488a2)[5] Here Socrates cannot be distinguished from the lovers of sights and sounds according to the sharp dichotomy defended in Book 5 as he stands somewhere between those who love only the images of beauty and those

4 τοῖς ὁρωμένοις εἴδεσι προσχρῶνται καὶ τοὺς λόγους περὶ αὐτῶν ποιοῦνται, οὐ περὶ τούτων διανοούμενοι, ἀλλ' ἐκείνων πέρι, οἷς ταῦτα ἔοικε.

5 The new Loeb translation by Emlyn-Jones and Preddy has 'how aptly I make the parallel.' But even if 'aptly' can be defended as a translation of the Greek (which is doubtful), the context clearly demands something like 'greedily' or Shorey's 'straining after'. If Adeimantus has just implicitly accused Socrates of constantly resorting to images, what will he 'see even more' (ἔτι μᾶλλον ἴδῃς) from Socrates's next image? Clearly, just how greedy Socrates is for images! It makes little sense in the context for Socrates to say that Adeimantus will now see even more the 'aptness' of his images when Adeimantus has made no comment on the aptness. Perhaps even better than 'greedily' is Sachs' 'how tenaciously I make images'.

capable of fully transcending these images in a vision of the form itself by itself and in itself. If Socrates in Book 5 is emphasizing the difference between philosophers and lovers of sights and sounds, it is because the similarity is so strong.

This point becomes even clearer if we consider the character of Socrates' narrative in the *Republic* as a whole and not just his use of isolated images. As Socrates explicitly observes at crucial junctures, what he is himself doing in the conversation with Glaucon and Adeimantus is *telling a story*. Before we arrive at Book 5, Socrates has been making a city in speech (369c9), and this has led him to educate the guardians 'as if they were in a story and we were telling a story' (*hôsper en muthôi muthologountes*, 376d9). When Socrates then proceeds to say that as children the guardians will be educated with stories (*muthous*), he characterizes stories as being on the whole a form of false discourse, though they may contain some truth (*hôs to holon eipein pseudos, eni de kai alêthê*, 377a4–5). The use of such false stories is explained when Socrates, in the context of arguing that the gods do not lie and should not be depicted as lying, distinguishes between two kinds of falsehood in speech (both distinguished from falsehood in the soul). The first is the kind of falsehood that can be used as a medicine to prevent harm, as when you tell your friend who has suddenly lost his mind that you no longer have that weapon he lent you and now wants back. The second kind, however, is simply the telling of stories (*muthologiai*) since, when we do not know the truth about ancient things,[6] a story can be a useful lie in being as much as possible like the truth (382d1–3).[7] Is not then Socrates' own *muthos* of a city that has never existed and perhaps never will exist only a falsehood seeking to be as like the truth as possible without assuming knowledge of the truth? Is it not a beautiful image of the just and the good recounted somewhat in a dream and not pretending to be a wakened vision of the truth? Indeed, it is not often enough noted that Socrates at the end of Book 4, far from claiming to have found justice in the city and the individual, concludes only that in claiming this 'we would not, I believe, appear to be completely lying' (*ouk an panu ti, oimai, doxamen pseudesthai*, 444a6).

Towards the end of his story of the guardians' education, Socrates summarizes what it would mean for both him and his guardians to be *mousikos*: it would mean, in short, to recognize everywhere they pass the forms (*eidê*) of courage, moderation, generosity and their kin, along with their opposites, perceiving their presence in the things they are found in, both they themselves and

6 διὰ τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι ὅπῃ τἀληθὲς ἔχει περὶ τῶν παλαιῶν.

7 ἀφομοιοῦντες τῷ ἀληθεῖ τὸ ψεῦδος ὅτι μάλιστα. See Schofield (2007), p. 143.

their images (402b9–c6).[8] Indeed, the general strategy of Socrates' education is to surround the guardians with beautiful images so that in loving such images they can eventually come to recognize and love the virtues reflected in them.[9] As Socrates observes a little later, 'Surely what is most beautiful is most lovable' (*to ge kalliston erasmiôtaton*, 402d6). Socrates in telling his story is making of himself and of his guardians lovers of beautiful sights and sounds. That is why in Book 5, as he is distinguishing the philosophical rulers from the guardians, he must specify what the *philosopher* seeks beyond such beautiful sights and sounds. Yet the philosopher does not thereby forfeit his or her kinship with either the guardians or the lovers of beautiful images.

2 Beauty as Philosophical Image in the Phaedrus

In the *Phaedrus*, the motto of which could be the claim in the *Republic* that 'what is most beautiful is most lovable', we see even more clearly why the philosopher can be mistaken for a lover of sights and sounds: he is a lover of beauty and not only that: he is 'madly' in love with beauty. Furthermore, what characterizes the philosopher here is not the direct relation to a form, but a particular use of images that allows them to remind him of the form once seen. The image here is attractive as something beautiful and in a way that fully engages us both spiritually and bodily, but it at the same time leads us beyond itself to that of which it is an image. The reason why the philosopher is 'mad' is that he remains caught between the image and its original, fully grasping neither the one nor the other. The beautiful image in its very attractiveness is mysterious in pointing beyond itself, but that to which it points is in this bodily existence inaccessible except indirectly through the image. The philosopher literally does not know 'what he is at'. He cannot be said to love simply the image as his love is provoked by something else glimpsed in the image; he cannot be said to love simply the form, as this is unavailable to him except through the image.

All of these ideas will become clear from a brief summary of the key part of Socrates' second speech on love. Here we have another story or myth and one developed around the central image of the soul growing wings in being reminded by sensible images in this world of the forms once seen beyond the

8 καὶ ἐνόντα ἐν οἷς ἔνεστιν αἰσθανώμεθα, καὶ αὐτὰ καὶ εἰκόνας αὐτῶν.

9 Imitative poetry is critiqued in Book 10 because, as Moss (2007), 437, has argued, 'it is "realistic" poetry: it copies things as they appear and not as they are. In particular it copies virtue as it appears, that is, *apparent* virtue, presenting varied, contradictory, dazzling heroes.'

heavens. We have, in short, an image for how images can provoke an ascent beyond themselves. It is indeed possible that Socrates in telling his story could by means of it be reminding both us and himself of what, according to the story, images cause the soul in love to recollect. Indeed, when Socrates waxes poetic in his description of the blissful vision of reality beyond the heavens and the earthly recollection thereof, he attributes this to 'the longing for the things back then' (*pothôi tôn tote*, 250c7) provoked by his own memory. In recounting the nurturing of wings, the story may be meant to nurture our own wings.

Yet the myth is clearly also intended to show the great difficulty of any ascent by means of images: though every human soul has seen the reality beyond the heavens, we are told, some souls saw it only briefly, and others have let this vision sink into complete oblivion on account of their current course of life; secondly, most of the forms, such as justice and self-control, shine so dimly in their sensible images that 'only a few people, approaching the likenesses, can see the source of the thing imaged' (250b4–5).[10] Yet Socrates describes what we could call the ideal case: the philosopher, whose soul saw more of the divine reality than any other, confronted with a sensible image of beauty, which is the one form capable of shining with radiance in its images (*ekphanestaton*) and being most lovable (*erasmiôtaton*, 250d6–e1).[11] In this situation, the philosopher 'when he sees the beauty we have down here is reminded of the true one' (249d5–6).

But while this movement from the image to the original might seem a purely rational procedure (and the identification of recollection with a certain *logismos* at 249c1 could be taken to suggest this), Socrates characterizes it as madness and for reasons that are made evident in the following passage: 'Only a few remain whose memory is sufficient; these, when they see an image (*homoiôma*) of what they saw up there, are struck dumb and are no longer in possession of themselves (*ouketi en autôn gignontai*), and they do not know what they are experiencing because they cannot fully grasp what it is they are seeing [*dia to mê hikanôs diaisthanesthai*]' (250a5–b1). The madness clearly lies in the fact that those who are reminded 'are no longer in themselves' but outside themselves, beside themselves. But what explains this *pathos* that Socrates claims they themselves do not understand? There appear to be two key related factors here. First, the philosopher sees more in the sensible image than the sensible image contains and therefore in perceiving it is taken both beyond

10 ἐπὶ τὰς εἰκόνας ἰόντες θεῶνται τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος.

11 The lover therefore worships this image as if it were the image of a god (255d–e). See the detailed discussion in R. Edmonds, "Putting him on a Pedestal: (Re)collection and the Use of Images in Plato's *Phaedrus*," in this volume.

it and beyond himself. The self-possessed and self-contented circle of perceiver and perceived is breached by the appearance of a divine reality that transcends both. But this experience would not be madness if the philosopher could simply leave the image behind in the full rational grasp of the reality that transcends it. This is why a second factor, often neglected by commentators, is crucial to understanding this experience: the philosopher here does not adequately grasp what he sees or, more precisely, *he does not adequately see through the image* (*diaisthanesthai*) *that of which it is an image*. If the philosopher is reminded by the image of the reality of which it is an image, he can still see this reality only through the image and then only insufficiently.[12] He is 'mad' because he is directed to something outside himself and beyond his immediate experience, which he cannot fully and rationally grasp.

But what is the nature of this relation that, though transcending the image towards that of which it is an image, cannot fully grasp what it sees beyond the image and therefore remains confined to the image? The answer in the context of Socrates' analysis in the *Phaedrus* is *erôs*. The perception of 'beauty well imitated' (*kallos eu memimêmenon*, 251a3) in a godlike face or bodily form, as that manifestation of the true reality beyond the heavens which is most manifest to the senses, awakens in the philosopher an erotic desire that makes him tremble and act mad in being directed simultaneously at the beauty of the beloved and at that of which it is an image, i.e., beauty itself. Yet it is important to note that, in the case of someone who was initiated long ago to the vision of beauty or whose nature has been corrupted and who therefore 'is not quickly led from here to there towards the beautiful itself' (250e2),[13] this same 'beauty well-imitated' instigates only self-abandonment to pleasure of the four-footed-beast kind, both natural and unnatural. The difference between philosophical and nonphilosophical eros thus rests on whether or not one can be led from the beautiful image to beauty itself. To see and be attracted to nothing in the sensible image but what it contains is to be in the position of the lover of sights and sounds or of the four-footed lover; to dispense with sensible images in the direct grasp of intelligible reality is knowledge in the

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12 Palumbo (2008), p. 274, n. 101, makes the crucial point here: 'È impossibile rendere visibile l'invisibile: *Pol.* 285e4–286a4, *Phaedr.* 250D, dunque nessuna immagine, a rigore, può permettere una visione diretta dell idee. Tuttavia senza l'immagine diviene impossibile anche ogni *tentativo* di rivelazione dell'essenza. È possibile affermare allora che l'*eidolon* non rivela l'essenza ma in qualche modo la indica, esplica la funzione di segno, di icona, di rappresentazione significativa …'

13 οὐκ ὀξέως ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσ' φέρεται πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ κάλλος.

strictest sense, but such dispensing belongs to what is now a mythic past; to be strung out, as it were, between the sensible and the intelligible, to be directed by the one to the other without fully transcending the one or fully grasping the other, to tell stories in longing for the vision that once was: this is philosophical *erôs*.[14]

It is significant in this regard that, when Socrates ranks the different souls according to how much they have seen of the truth ('the law of Adrastea'), the first rank is occupied by the *philosophos*, the *philokalos*, the *mousikos* and the *erôtikos* (248d3). What we are probably meant to see is that these are all the same person: the philosopher is a lover of beauty, a kind of poet or storyteller (*mousikou tinos* is what the text says), and an erotic.[15] But as the ranking shows, with a decrease in the vision of truth, the philosopher can degenerate into a sophist (248e3, eighth rank), the lover of beauty and follower of the Muses can degenerate into a purely mimetic poet (248e1–2, the sixth rank),[16] and the erotic can degenerate into a tyrant (248e3, ninth rank; recall that erôs is the ruling principle in the tyrant as described in Book 9 of the *Republic*). This ranking, this suggestion of a difference of *degree* between the philosopher and his aberrations, is possible on account of the ambiguity of the sensible image that enables us, *more or less*, to be reminded by it of the truth only reflected in it. What distinguishes the philosophical eros for beauty is its greater degree of transcendence, its greater degree of remembering, where we are always speaking of degrees (*pleista*, 248d2).

14 Nightingale (2004), 163, has emphasized the significance of the beautiful body in the *Phaedrus* being called not only an *eikôn* but also an *agalma* (251a, 252d–e): it is thereby characterized as a *divine image* in which the divine is somehow present. She cites in support (164) Vernant's characterization of an *agalma* as seeking 'to establish real contact with the world beyond, to actualize it, to make it present, and thereby to participate intimately in the divine; yet by the same move, it must also emphasize what is inaccessible and mysterious in divinity, its alien quality, its otherness …' (Vernant [1991], 153). *Agalmata* are also what Alcibiades in the *Symposium* describes seeing in Socrates: see below.

15 As Yunis (2011), 144, suggests, all these terms refer to 'aspects of the philosophical life.'

16 Heitsch (1997), 114, suggest that the *mousikos* identified with the philosopher is 'nicht der Künstler als Experte, der sich auf ein bestimmtes Handwerk, das der Nachahmung, versteht, sondern der Inspirierte, der von den Musen Ergriffene, der nicht mehr Herr ist seiner selbst.'

3 Socrates' Attraction to the Beautiful Agathon

The theme of *erôs* of course leads us naturally to the *Symposium*. As already indicated, what I wish to focus on here is the relation between Socrates and Agathon. It too often goes unnoted that this relation, understood as one of both rivalry and attraction, forms the backbone of the dialogue. Right near the start we have Socrates' ironic comparison of his wisdom with that of Agathon and then Agathon's suggestion that Dionysus will soon decide their claims to wisdom (175e7–9). We are reminded of this towards the dialogue's end when Alcibiades in the guise of Dionysus first crowns Agathon and then, upon seeing Socrates, crowns him as well (note that *both* are crowned). Furthermore, if Socrates claims expertise in love (177d7–8), Eryximachus suggests that Socrates *and* Agathon are the two experts in love among the party (193e4–5).

This rivalry between two experts presumably explains the severity of Socrates' critique of Agathon's speech. The upshot of this critique is that Agathon's is a beautiful speech, but lacks truth (see 198e1–2, 199a7, b3). This is a puzzling critique in a number of ways. First, as I have argued elsewhere,[17] there is much in Agathon's speech that Socrates himself will acknowledge as 'true' in his own speech. Therefore, Socrates can be so critical only by initially ignoring the serious content of Agathon's speech and focusing on the poetic peroration: 'I didn't find the rest quite so wonderful, but who would not be enchanted in hearing the ending with its beauty of language?' (198b3–5). The 'rest' here is the body of the speech in which Agathon presents his arguments to demonstrate the goodness and beauty of love, arguments he himself characterizes as mixing seriousness with play: 'Let this, Phaedrus, be my account dedicated to the gods, partly partaking of play, partly of measured seriousness, to the extent of my ability' (197e6–8).[18] Socrates therefore simply decides to ignore any serious content and focuses his critique only on the playful wordplay with which the speech's conclusion is ornamented.

Nevertheless, the first thing Socrates does when he turns to a critical examination of Agathon's speech is to praise as correct its organizing principle: i.e., that we need to exhibit the nature of Eros before exhibiting its effects (199c3–5), a principle reiterated at the start of Socrates' own speech (201d8–e2).[19] Fur-

17 "Why Agathon's Beauty Matters," forthcoming.

18 τὰ μὲν παιδιᾶς, τὰ δὲ σπουδῆς μετρίας … μετέχων.

19 This is not to deny that the principle undergoes some modification in Socrates' adoption of it. As Sedley (2006), 52–54, has argued, Agathon's starting point is an account of what love is *like* (οἷός ἐστιν, 195a4) that takes the form of a description of the qualities that make love good and beautiful, rather than an account of what love *is*, i.e., its essential nature, which

thermore, the question to Agathon with which Socrates begins his elenchus is formulated thus: 'Come, since you have so beautifully and magnificently (*kalôs kai megaloprepôs*) expounded in other respects what Love is, tell me this about it: is Love such as to be the love of something or of nothing?' (199c6–d2). Finally, while Socrates indeed goes on to refute a central contention of Agathon's speech, i.e., that Love is itself beautiful and good, he claims at the start of his own speech that he once believed exactly what Agathon believes (201e3–5).[20] There is no reason to dismiss this as mere politeness: something for which Socrates has not shown a propensity in the rest of the dialogue. Rather, if he engages Agathon in discussion, he does so because he recognizes in Agathon a serious position that he himself once held. It is hard to avoid the conclusion: despite his contentious mockery of the poetic discourse with which Agathon's speech ends, Socrates recognizes that of all the speeches given it is Agathon's that came the closest to the truth and is most deserving of serious discussion.[21]

Yet presumably one reason why Agathon's speech has not been taken more seriously is Socrates' repeated description of it as 'beautiful', reflecting Agathon's own extraordinary beauty,[22] and the assumption that beauty is something superficial having little to do with truth. One of the central points of similarity, however, between Socrates and Agathon is to be found in their understandings of the relation between beauty and goodness. Both neither completely identify the two terms nor see them as separable. Central to Socrates' own speech is Diotima's substitution of 'good' for 'beautiful' in order to arrive at the conclusion that what we seek from the possession of beautiful things is happiness (204d–e). At the same time, this substitution does not appear to

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is Socrates' own starting point. Sedley accordingly concludes that 'Agathon's method is not yet fully Socratic' (54).

20 And Agathon's view, after all, is not so obviously ridiculous or false. As Allen (1991), p. 44, n. 69, notes, 'Agathon, if he is mistaken in describing Eros as beautiful, is surely not making a linguistic mistake: not only the object of desire, but the person desiring could be characterized as καλός, as Phaedrus and Pausanias make clear. Indeed, desire itself, and specifically erotic desire, could be so characterized.'

21 As Centrone (2009), p. xxii, suggests, 'il suo discorso sembra contenere molti spunti accettabili nell'ottica di Platone; ma forse proprio per questo sarà anche quello attaccato piú direttamente nei suoi fondamenti.' Stokes (1986), 145, has sought to show how Socrates' critique of Agathon genuinely engages with the content of Agathon's speech, so that 'Agathon sheds the foolish weakness he is often saddled with, just as Socrates sheds his overbearing rhetoric. This passage, at least, can now be read as a *dialogue*.'

22 Considering all the surviving testimony, Lèvêque (1955), 36, concludes: 'Éclatante beauté, telle est donc l'impression qu'Agathon produisit sur tous ses contemporains.'

presuppose a simple identity given the different roles assigned to the beautiful and the good in the higher mysteries: what the lover pursues, both in its different manifestations and in itself, is beauty and not the good, while the good, in the form of true virtue, is what the lover gives birth to through intercourse with beauty.[23] The relation is thus neither a simple identity nor a sharp distinction. Socrates therefore would hardly be justified in dismissing the beauty of Agathon's speech, and indeed Agathon's own beauty and the beauty of love on his account, as *mere* beauty, as something superficial having no necessary connection to goodness. At the very least, this beauty of Agathon is something that could lead us to the good.

It is significant that immediately after calling Agathon's speech beautiful (*kalôs ge eipes*), Socrates asks him if anything good is not also beautiful (*t'agatha ouk kai kala dokei soi einai*, 201c2). Some, such as Waterfield, have taken this to imply that the contrary is not true, i.e., that not everything beautiful is good, and have seen here an implicit critique of Agathon.[24] But since what Socrates seeks to establish here is that to be deprived of beautiful things *is* to be deprived of good things, an opposition of the beautiful to the good (i.e., the suggestion that some beautiful things are bad) is not even implied. Even in his critique of Agathon's rhetoric, Socrates does not oppose beauty and truth, but rather he suggests that they go together: a good encomium is one that *chooses the most beautiful truths* (198d3–6). It is hard to see, then, how Socrates could join so many modern commentators in dismissing Agathon and his speech as 'merely' beautiful.

As for Agathon himself, he surely is not guilty of simply reducing goodness to beauty. His speech clearly distinguishes between the two: he first sets out to show how Eros is *kallistos* (195a8–196b5) and then how it is *aristos* (196b5–197b10).[25] Furthermore, if Agathon towards the end of the speech relates the

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23 See Stokes (1986), pp. 154–155 and 181. As he notes with regard to Diotima's 'higher mysteries', the desire for immortality 'is not a desire directly to possess the beautiful so much as to procreate offspring in the beautiful. It is, however, the desire for what is good. The functions of the good and of the beautiful in the argument and its exposition are quite different' (181). See also Sedley (2006), p. 49, n. 4. who denies that the good and the beautiful are ever identical in Plato's dialogues.

24 Waterfield (1994), p. 84.

25 This is a point noted by Steven Berg (2010), 77: 'Agathon is thus the first speaker since Phaedrus to distinguish the beautiful and the good and he makes explicit what Phaedrus left implicit.' Yet Berg claims that Agathon goes on to conflate the two in attributing the power to effect good to eros as a poet, i.e., as a maker of images: 'What Agathon shows, then, is that the beautiful is an image in speech of the good that speciously appropriates

two properties, it is to characterize the love of beauty as a means to acquiring what is good (197b8–9),[26] as it is in the highest mysteries of Diotima's account.[27] Thus Agathon's understanding of the relation between the good and the beautiful appears no different from Socrates' own. Furthermore, far from sacrificing truth to beauty, Agathon questions the veracity of the poets (citing their views, he adds, 'if they spoke the truth' [195c2–3]) and, as noted, carefully distinguishes between the more serious and the more playful aspects of his own speech.

One must therefore suspect that the reason for the contest between Agathon and Socrates and for Socrates' unfair critique of Agathon's speech is that the beauty cultivated and promoted by the poet is not so easy to separate from the goodness pursued by the philosopher. The beautiful Agathon is not so indifferent to goodness and truth as Socrates pretends, and Socrates is not so indifferent to beauty as he sometimes pretends. In the words of the *Philebus*, after all, in the nature of beauty lies the power of the good (64e5–6).[28]

One might of course be tempted to identify Agathon with the mere appearance of the good while identifying Socrates with its reality,[29] just as one might

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to itself the being of the good. Agathon's entire speech is just such an image. His claim, then, that wisdom is the good is the beautiful masquerading as the good. His god Eros in the wisdom of his making is the unreal unity of the beautiful and the good' (88). This critique I address below.

26 ἐκ τοῦ ἐρᾶν τῶν καλῶν πάντ' ἀγαθὰ γέγονεν καὶ θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις.

27 See Stokes (1986), pp. 125–126, who claims that Agathon is trying to have things both ways. But isn't Socrates as well?

28 νῦν δὴ καταπέφευγεν ἡμῖν ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δύναμις εἰς τὴν τοῦ καλλοῦ φύσιν. Commenting on the distinction between beauty and the good in Agathon's speech, Ficino concludes: 'bonitatis florem quemdam esse pulchritudinem volumus' (*In Convivium*, V.1.40). But for Ficino there are two senses to this analogy: beauty is the flower of the good not only in the sense that it is the outward manifestation of inner goodness, but also in the sense that, as the flower carries the seed from which other flowers will grow, beauty leads us to the good: 'ut flores arborum seminibus orti semina ipsi quoque producunt, ita spetiem hanc bonitatis florem, ut ex bono pululat, sic et ad bonum amantes producere' (V.1.40).

29 Thus Allen (1991), 40, though showing the many ways in which Agathon's speech anticipates Socrates', concludes: 'Both speeches are rhetorical. But Agathon's rhetoric deals with appearance, as Socrates' examination of it will show, and Diotima's with reality.' Likewise, Sedley (2010), 65, while emphasizing the Socratic content of Agathon's speech, in the end sees in Agathon nothing but 'a pale ghost of the Platonic truth' and 'mere "images" of the philosophical understanding in which real virtue resides.' If Sedley acknowledges that of the speeches Agathon's comes closest to the Platonic position, this 'closest' is still in his view immeasurably far. There can be no doubt that what Agathon provides is in some sense an image, but to assume that such an image is to be disparaged and rejected by the

be tempted to identify poetry with mere imitation and philosophy with an unmediated grasp of the truth.[30] There can be no doubt that Agathon's speech shows him to be an imitator par excellence, as it literally depicts love *in his own image*. Furthermore, this is the characteristic of Agathon that is emphasized in his portrayal by Aristophanes in the *Thesmophorizusae*. There, in the context of explaining why he is dressed as a woman, Agathon argues that the poet must himself be beautiful in order to compose beautiful plays, since 'one necessarily composes things like one's nature' (167).[31] This is a principle both explicitly articulated in Agathon's speech in the *Symposium* when he cites with approval the old saying that like is drawn to like (*homoin homoioi aei pelazei*, 195b5) and put to work there, since both the beauty of the speech itself and the beauty it attributes to love are only reflections of Agathon's own beauty. But if we return to Aristophanes' play, Agathon there is made to express the view that imitation is not simply the result of being good or beautiful, but can itself be that by which we become good and beautiful. In claiming that the poet must become like his characters, Agathon explains that 'mimêsis can provide us with the things we do not possess' (156).[32] It is thus possible that in imitating the beauty and goodness of love Agathon seeks not only to reflect what he takes to be his own nature, but also further to become himself good and beautiful.[33] Here it is worth noting that Socrates describes the young Agathon in the

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philosopher is to assume that the philosopher is capable of an unmediated access to the truth. Diotima of course describes such an ideal, but to believe that Socrates or any other philosopher could fully attain it, as Sedley apparently does (see p. 65), as well as more recently Dominick (2013), 561–562, is to ignore the context of Diotima's teaching and thus to misread the dialogue as a whole. For my own reading of the dialogue on this point, see Gonzalez (2012).

30 'Agathon as sophist is an image of Socrates the philosopher and his imitation of mind as wisdom finds its original in Socrates' knowledge of ignorance. Agathon, however, is a sophist who makes the unique claim that Eros is the core of his wisdom and its power. He is a peculiarly Socratic false image of Socrates whose sole expertise is erotics' (Berg [2012], 89).

31 ὅμοια γὰρ ποιεῖν ἀνάγκη τῇ φύσει.

32 Lèvêque (1955), 125, sees here 'une évolution dans la conception de l'artiste: il n'est plus le créateur d'une oeuvre qui exprime avec une nécessité intime sa nature profonde; il devient un acteur qui veut produire une impression et se prête, pour atteindre son but, à toutes les transformations de son être. A la place de la φύσις nait la τέχνη, à la place de l'inspiration qui contraint, la rhétorique préméditée.' On this passage in relation to the concept of mimesis in Plato, see Tulli (2013), 316–317.

33 In this case Agathon would be doing what Christopher Moore describes in the paper included in this volume ("Images of Oneself in Plato"): using an image to know or even

Protagoras as being not only beautiful in appearance, but as having a beautiful and good nature (315e1).[34] Furthermore, it would be wrong to identify Agathon with the poetic tradition Plato otherwise criticizes. For one thing, Agathon, as already noted, treats his poetic sources critically, differing in this from the other speakers.[35] This should not surprise us since Agathon's distinction as a tragedian was to invent his own plots rather than imitate the traditional stories told by the poets.[36] And Agathon's theatre, from what we know of it, could be judged to be especially philosophical in character.[37]

If we are tempted to think that Socrates has nothing to do with the imitation practiced by Agathon, we should first recall that Socrates goes to Agathon's party all dressed up because, he explains, Agathon is beautiful and he must go to him *having become* beautiful (*houtô kalos gegenêmenos*, 174a5). But then just a few lines later he alters a proverb to describe himself and Aristodemus as good men going unbidden to the feast of the good (174b4–5). So it is Socrates himself who is here not distinguishing between beauty and goodness, is ascribing both to Agathon, and is understanding our relation to both as one of imitation. Furthermore, if we are inclined to criticize Agathon for describing love in his own image, asserting that he thereby misses the truth about love, we should recall that Socrates does the same thing in describing love as ugly, barefoot and poor! Finally, Agathon's claim in Aristophanes' play could be made Socrates' own: we become what we imitate and therefore the solution to not possessing goodness and beauty is to imitate them.

It is here, however, that we can begin to perceive where the real difference between Socrates and Agathon lies. If Agathon tends to think that he is what

become himself. Yet one could say that unlike Socrates' clearly insufficient self-images, Agathon's image of himself borders on idolatry and therefore lacks the impetus to self-overcoming.

34 καλόν τε κἀγαθον τήν φύσιν, τὴν δ' οὖν ἰδέαν πάνυ καλός.

35 See Belfiore (2012), 136.

36 'Nevertheless even in tragedy there are some plays with but one or two known names in them, the rest being inventions; and there are some without a single known name, e. g. Agathon's *Antheus*, in which both incidents and names are of the poet's invention, and it is no less delightful on that account' (Aristotle, *Poetics* 6, 1451b19–24). Lèvêque (1955), 55, argues that this was the play with which Agathon achieved the victory being celebrated in the *Symposium*.

37 As Lèvêque (1955), 116–117, notes, 'nous retrouvons dans la tragédie d'Agathon cette même attitude réflexive, ce même besoin de connaître l'homme et le monde, cette même curiosité inlassable de l'esprit, ce même effort d'analyse s'appliquant à la totalité du réel. Son théâtre est un théâtre raisonneur, et même philosophique et, comme tel, rapelle de près celui d'Euripide.'

he imitates, that he possesses what he loves, Socrates interprets all imitation as desire and all desire as lack. Agathon the poet is satisfied with images because he fails to see the great gulf that separates the image from the original. After all, Socrates needs *to become* beautiful in going to Agathon's house because, in contrast to Agathon, he is notoriously ugly. In describing love in his own image, he must therefore transform love into something *lacking* beauty. Yet as Socrates is careful to insist, his love, if lacking beauty, is not thereby *ugly*, just as Socrates himself, if ugly on the outside, is, as Alcibiades will remind us with his image of the Silenus, full of beautiful images (*agalmata … pankala*, 216d6–217a1). Beauty in and for Socrates is, in shortly, deeply ambiguous.

This is why Socrates describes Agathon's wisdom as manifest and bright (*lampra*), while describing his own as 'ambiguous like a dream' (*amphisbêtêsimos hôs onar*, 175e3–4). Agathon's appearance, both his own and that of his poetry, is bright because it tends to be all surface, in no way pointing beyond itself or promising hidden depths. The images, stories and even arguments that constitute Socrates' wisdom, in contrast, are ambiguous in that, whatever their surface appeal, they darkly suggest something beyond themselves, they are neither fully here nor there. Socrates' comparison of his own wisdom here to a dream might appear surprising given his critique in the *Republic* of the lovers of sights and sounds as being in a dream-like state. But as we have seen, even there we have reason to doubt that Socrates is fully awake: his superiority over the lovers of sights and sounds lies only in his recognition of the dream *as a dream* or, in other words, of the image *as an image*. It is only because he thus recognizes the gulf between image and reality that Socrates can at least envisage, through the eyes of the priestess Diotima, a beauty that is no longer an image and the contact with which will give birth to goodness that is no longer an image (212a4–6).[38] But if Socratic eros recognizes the deficiency of images and is directed beyond them, that need not make it any less enamored

38 Dominick (2013) raises the question of how Alcibiades can describe Socrates' words as containing 'images [*agalmata*] of virtues' (22a3–4) when the lover who has completed the ascent should be giving birth not to images of virtue, but to true virtue. His answer is that Socrates' images lead to true virtue since 'Images necessarily point beyond themselves, toward what they are not—they point toward their models, toward the originals of which they are images. To recognize an image is to recognize something that falls short, something that calls its model to mind, though the image itself is not the model' (563). The difference, then, between Socrates and lovers Dominick considers lower on the ascent is that the latter give birth only to images of virtue while Socrates gives birth to true virtue *by way of images*: "the successful lover is full of images, but his images are for the sake of true virtue" (564). This latter point is, I believe, the crucial one.

of images. On Socrates' account in the *Symposium*, it is only through beautiful images—and this includes *beautiful bodies*—that we can access, if at all, the good. That Socrates critiques Agathon and the beautiful images he represents, that he wishes to go beyond him, in no way shows that he does not remain attracted to him.

This is made clear at the dialogue's end when Socrates expresses his desire that Agathon sit next to him so that he can praise him as Alcibiades praised Socrates: Socrates even claims that 'I'm really desirous of praising him' (*panu epithumô auton enkômiasai*, 223a2). This desire is so incongruous to those who ignore the importance to Socrates of Agathon and what he represents, that the passage is either completely ignored by commentators (the more common strategy) or dismissed as ironic. But there is in fact nothing incongruous or surprising about Socrates' desire. After having critiqued Agathon and his earlier self for not conceiving of love as a lover (204c1–3), Socrates is eager to praise Agathon as the embodiment of the good and beautiful qualities that belong to the *beloved*. Socrates indeed twice in the dialogue addresses Agathon as the 'beloved' (201c9, 222d5). After Alcibiades' speech praising Socrates the lover as if he were the beloved and as if he possessed a wisdom he disavows, Socrates is eager to counter by assuming the role of lover again in praising someone who, having misunderstood what it means to be a lover, can still be an object of love.

The dramatic action is especially significant here. At first Alcibiades tries to come between Socrates and Agathon, but only to witness what he describes as Socrates' resourcefulness in getting Agathon to sit next to him (223a8–9): a description that clearly echoes Diotima's description of love's resourcefulness as explained by its mother Poverty lying down with its father Resource (203b7–c1). Socrates lying down with Agathon is indeed a reenactment of Poverty lying down with Resource. But in the end it is the sudden arrival of drunken revelers that comes between Socrates and Agathon and prevents Socrates from giving his speech of praise (223b2–6). Is it too much to hear the suggestion here that Alcibiades and the drunken revelers try to come between Socrates and *the good* he desires, or at least its beautiful image?[39] We can assume, of course, that Socrates' praise of Agathon, like Alcibiades' praise of Socrates, would have been

39 Belfiore (2012), 176, finds this play already in Socrates' refutation of Agathon: '… when Socrates says that Eros is deficient in (or needs) good things (*tôn agathôn endeês*; 201c5), he is simultaneously refuting Agathon and paying him a compliment, by stating that Eros is in need of Agathon. This pun also helps explain why Socrates addresses Agathon as 'beloved'. In identifying him with the things Eros needs, Socrates casts Agathon in the role of beloved, a role that Agathon's speech already gave to his soft and delicate Eros (see 204c1–5).'

mixed with critique, and this for the simple reason that it would have been a praise of *the good* and therefore implicitly a critique of the eponymous person who is only a deficient if beautiful appearance of the good. Yet Socrates knows perfectly well that the pursuit of the good cannot dispense with beautiful images, however deficient. Socrates loves Agathon.

Conclusion

What I have tried to show in this paper is that if Plato must distinguish the philosopher from the lover of sights and sounds, from the four-footed lover, and from the imitative poet, it is because the philosopher has a deep kinship to all three. Furthermore, the kinship and the difference have their source in what I would characterize as the 'ambiguity' of the image, an ambiguity that especially comes to the fore in the case of the beautiful image. Because beauty, as Socrates explains in the *Phaedrus*, is characterized by an immanent transcendence, it can make of the image something that both attracts to itself and points beyond itself. The image thereby becomes both promising and dangerous and demands both love and critique.

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Putting Him on a Pedestal: (Re)collection and the Use of Images in Plato's *Phaedrus*

Radcliffe G. Edmonds III

1 Introduction

What is the right way to treat an image? Plato notoriously both condemns the power of images and makes use of memorably vivid and dramatic images himself, all the while providing caveats about their deceptive qualities and limitations. Clearly, there are right and wrong ways to handle images. One of the most vivid illustrations in the Greek tradition of the wrong way to treat an image is undoubtedly the story of the unhappy young man who fell in love with the statue of Aphrodite at Knidos, the great masterpiece made by Praxiteles. Concealing himself in the temple at night, he tried to sexually assault the statue, leaving behind a dark stain on the thigh of the statue that the temple attendants continue to point out to wondering tourists.

> Finally, the violence of his desires made him lose his reason, his audacity serving him for pimp. One evening, at sunset, he slid unseen behind the temple door and hid in the darkest corner, holding his breath. The keepers closed the gate as usual, and this new Anchises found himself alone inside. Who would dare recount the sort of deeds he consummated that wicked night? In short, at daybreak this sign of his amorous embraces was discovered, a sign which ever since has marked the goddess as a reminder of her suffering. As for the young man, they say he threw himself upon the rocks, or into the sea. In any case he disappeared forever.[1]
>
> PS. LUCIAN, *Amores* 16.19–31

1 πέρας αἱ σφοδραὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πόθων ἐπιτάσεις ἀπενοήθησαν, εὑρέθη δὲ τόλμα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας μαστροπός· ἤδη γὰρ ἐπὶ δύσιν ἡλίου κλίνοντος ἠρέμα λαθὼν τοὺς παρόντας ὄπισθε τῆς θύρας παρεισερρύη καὶ στὰς ἀφανὴς ἐνδοτάτω σχεδὸν οὐδ' ἀναπνέων ἠτρέμει, συνήθως δὲ τῶν ζακόρων ἔξωθεν τὴν θύραν ἐφελκυσαμένων ἔνδον ὁ καινὸς Ἀγχίσης καθεῖρκτο. καὶ τί γὰρ ἀρρήτου νυκτὸς ἐγὼ τόλμαν ἡ λάλος ἐπ' ἀκριβὲς ὑμῖν διηγοῦμαι; τῶν ἐρωτικῶν περιπλοκῶν ἴχνη ταῦτα μεθ' ἡμέραν ὤφθη καὶ τὸν σπίλον εἶχεν ἡ θεὸς ὧν ἔπαθεν ἔλεγχον. αὐτόν γε μὴν τὸν νεανίαν, ὡς ὁ δημώδης ἱστορεῖ λόγος, ἢ κατὰ πετρῶν φασιν ἢ κατὰ πελαγίου κύματος ἐνεχθέντα παντελῶς ἀφανῆ γενέσθαι. (trans. Andrew Kallimachos)

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Other stories of such *agalmatophilia* occur in a variety of sources, and a number of scholars have recently commented on the implications of this fetish for understanding the way the Greeks looked at art and the way that they worshipped their gods.[2]

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato presents a curiously similar image to this story of the sexual assault of a statue, with the description of how the dark horse of the soul tries to sexually assault the image of the beautiful beloved, only to be restrained by the reverent awe of the soul's charioteer, who falls back, stunned by the vision of the beloved as by a divine image. The dark horse, like a rampant stallion, with stretched out tail and violent exertions, endeavors to leap upon this beautiful form,

> Struggling, and neighing, and pulling he forces them again with the same purpose to approach the beloved one, and when they are near him, he lowers his head, raises his tail, takes the bit in his teeth, and pulls shamelessly … And as the charioteer looks upon the beloved, his memory is borne back to the true nature of beauty, and he sees it standing with prudence upon a holy pedestal, and when he sees this he is afraid and falls backward in reverence, and in falling he is forced to pull the reins so violently backward as to bring both horses upon their haunches.[3]
>
> 254de

The charioteer sees the beautiful beloved as an image of the divine beauty, like a statue (*agalma*) of a god on its pedestal (*en bathrô*) and resists the dark horse's attempts to have sex with it.[4] If the charioteer maintains control, the soul may

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2 Steiner 2001 raises the issue of the place of statues in Greek thought, while Elsner 2007 suggests that there is a particular mode of religious viewing of statues in Greek and Roman religion. Kindt 2012 examines a number of stories about interactions with religious statues, including the problem with *agalmatophilia*.

3 βιαζόμενος, χρεμετίζων, ἕλκων ἠνάγκασεν αὖ προσελθεῖν τοῖς παιδικοῖς ἐπὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς λόγους, καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἐγγὺς ἦσαν, ἐγκύψας καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν κέρκον, ἐνδακὼν τὸν χαλινόν, μετ' ἀναιδείας ἕλκει· 254bc ἰδόντος δὲ τοῦ ἡνιόχου ἡ μνήμη πρὸς τὴν τοῦ κάλλους φύσιν ἠνέχθη, καὶ πάλιν εἶδεν αὐτὴν μετὰ σωφροσύνης ἐν ἁγνῷ βάθρῳ βεβῶσαν· ἰδοῦσα δὲ ἔδεισέ τε καὶ σεφθεῖσα ἀνέπεσεν ὑπτία, καὶ ἅμα ἠναγκάσθη εἰς τοὐπίσω ἑλκύσαι τὰς ἡνίας οὕτω σφόδρα, ὥστ' ἐπὶ τὰ ἰσχία ἄμφω καθίσαι τὼ ἵππω. (Translations of Plato are taken, with minor modifications, from the 1925 Fowler translation.)

4 When Plato refers to the beautiful beloved as like a statue in the *Phaedrus*, the word is often (e.g., 251a6, 252d7) ἄγαλμα, although other terms do appear (εἰκόνας 250b4, εἴδωλον 250d5, cp. 255d8, 276a9). For a recent overview of the terminology for Greek religious statues, see Nick 2002: 11–25, with a catalog of literary testimonia pp. 211–231.

return again to the divine realm, but if the dark horse succeeds in getting its pleasure, the soul is condemned to wander long ages in the shadowy realms.

Plato uses this image of two ways of treating an image as an illustration of how—and how not—to treat images in general, whether they be the image of beauty presented by the beautiful beloved or even images of wisdom and justice presented by the writings of a philosopher. In every case, the image must serve as a reminder, a stimulus to recollection and a track that marks the path that memory and reason must follow to arrive at truth, rather than something to be enjoyed as an end in itself. The proper treatment of an image is thus itself an image of the process of recollection, and the ritual actions of adornment, sacrifice, and following in a procession that are appropriate to the treatment of statues of gods become images, not just of how the lover should treat the beautiful beloved, but of how the orator should compose a speech and of the way the philosopher should treat all the images of divine truth that appear in the world. The graphic image of the horse sexually assaulting the boy is likewise an image of what can go wrong when an image is used not as a reminder but as a source of pleasure in itself.

In the *Phaedrus*, then, Plato plays with the problematic status of images, employing some of his most vivid and memorable images to illustrate how images may be used philosophically in the process of recollection.[5] Both the worship paid to the beloved icon and good speeches employ images and mnemonic associations to lead the follower, step by step, toward the truth. While Phaedrus fixes his desire upon the images, both the beloved boy and the speeches, Socrates uses these images as signs on his philosophic path, reminders of whence he has come and whither he is going.

2 The Process of Recollection through Images

The *Phaedrus* is notable as a dialogue in which the stimulus of visual images is connected with the process of philosophic recollection; it is the beloved's beauty that sets the soul in motion along the path of recollection.[6] Since Plato

5 Gonzalez 2007 rightly emphasizes that recollection is a process, an ongoing practice rather than a single action, and he also importantly links this kind of process with the ways Plato talks about eros: the things recollected, like the objects of eros, are neither possessed by the subject nor totally divorced.

6 Cp., the excellent discussion of Nightingale 2011: 157–168, who, however, focuses on the act of gazing (*theoria*), rather than other aspects of the interaction with the beautiful beloved as an *agalma*.

characteristically never sets out a systematic account of how images relate to the process of recollection, to clarify this relation we must look to references he makes in other dialogues, as well as to the ways some more systematic receivers of his ideas, such as Aristotle, Proclus, and even the modern semiotician Peirce, treat the matter.

Perhaps the most significant discussion occurs in the *Phaedo*, where Plato has Socrates discuss different forms of recollection with Simmias, showing how certain visual images provoke recollection in different ways.

> "Well, you know that a lover when he sees a lyre or a cloak or anything else which his beloved is wont to use, perceives the lyre and in his mind receives an image of the boy to whom the lyre belongs, do you not? But this is recollection, just as when one sees Simmias, one often remembers Cebes, and I could cite countless such examples."
>
> "To be sure you could," said Simmias.
>
> "Now," said he, "is that sort of thing a kind of recollection? Especially when it takes place with regard to things which have already been forgotten through time and inattention?"
>
> "Certainly," he replied.
>
> "Well, then," said Socrates, "can a person on seeing a picture of a horse or of a lyre be reminded of a man, or on seeing a picture of Simmias be reminded of Cebes?"
>
> "Surely."
>
> "And on seeing a picture of Simmias he can be reminded of Simmias himself?"
>
> "Yes," said he.
>
> "All these examples show, then, that recollection is caused by like things and also by unlike things, do they not?"
>
> "Yes."[7]
>
> *Phaedo* 73d–74a

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7 οὐκοῦν οἶσθα ὅτι οἱ ἐρασταί, ὅταν ἴδωσιν λύραν ἢ ἱμάτιον ἢ ἄλλο τι οἷς τὰ παιδικὰ αὐτῶν εἴωθε χρῆσθαι, πάσχουσι τοῦτο· ἔγνωσάν τε τὴν λύραν καὶ ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ ἔλαβον τὸ εἶδος τοῦ παιδὸς οὗ ἦν ἡ λύρα; τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν ἀνάμνησις· ὥσπερ γε καὶ Σιμμίαν τις ἰδὼν πολλάκις κέβητος ἀνεμνήσθη, καὶ ἄλλα που μυρία τοιαῦτ᾽ ἂν εἴη.

μυρία μέντοι νὴ Δία, ἔφη ὁ Σιμμίας.

οὐκοῦν, ἦ δ᾽ ὅς, τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀνάμνησίς τίς ἐστι; μάλιστα μέντοι ὅταν τις τοῦτο πάθῃ περὶ ἐκεῖνα ἃ ὑπὸ χρόνου καὶ τοῦ μὴ ἐπισκοπεῖν ἤδη ἐπελέληστο;

πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη.

τί δέ; ἦ δ᾽ ὅς· ἔστιν ἵππον γεγραμμένον ἰδόντα καὶ λύραν γεγραμμένην ἀνθρώπου ἀναμνησθῆναι, καὶ Σιμμίαν ἰδόντα γεγραμμένον κέβητος ἀναμνησθῆναι;

Socrates emphasizes that visual similarity is not the only way in which an image can make the viewer think of the thing which it represents for the viewer, the thing that is signified by that image functioning as a sign, but Plato does not pursue the distinctions systematically.[8]

The modern semiotician Peirce draws a more systematic distinction between three types of signs that relate to their signifieds in different ways: the *index*, which bears a physical or causal relation to its signified; the *icon*, which shares a visual or other qualitative resemblance to its signified; and the *symbol*, which has an indirect or arbitrary relation to its signified.[9] The differences between these kinds of signs may be illustrated with the example of fire. Smoke is an *index* of fire; it indicates that fire is present to have produced it. A stylized picture of flames, by contrast, is an *icon*, since the picture bears a visual resemblance to what it represents. The English word 'fire' itself is a *symbol*,

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πάνυ γε.

οὐκοῦν καὶ Σιμμίαν ἰδόντα γεγραμμένον αὐτοῦ Σιμμίου ἀναμνησθῆναι;

ἔστι μέντοι, ἔφη.

ἆρ' οὖν οὐ κατὰ πάντα ταῦτα συμβαίνει τὴν ἀνάμνησιν εἶναι μὲν ἀφ' ὁμοίων, εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ ἀνομοίων;

συμβαίνει.

ἀλλ' ὅταν γε ἀπὸ τῶν ὁμοίων ἀναμιμνῄσκηταί τίς τι, ἆρ' οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον τόδε προσπάσχειν, ἐννοεῖν εἴτε τι ἐλλείπει τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα εἴτε μὴ ἐκείνου οὗ ἀνεμνήσθη;

ἀνάγκη, ἔφη.

8 Studies, such as Said 1987 or Vernant 1990, that attempt to draw distinctions between types of images in Greek thought provide a useful way of thinking about possible differences, but Plato seems deliberately to avoid making systematic distinctions between icons, idols, and other forms of images, using different vocabulary interchangeably.

9 Peirce expresses these distinctions in different ways in his corpus, but the following represent his differentiations. Peirce 1991: 30 "It follows that there are three kinds of representations. 1st. Those whose relation to their objects is a mere community in some quality, and these representations may be termed *Likenesses*. 2nd. Those whose relation to their objects consists in a correspondence in fact, and these may be termed *Indices* or *Signs*. 3rd. Those the ground of whose relation to their objects is an imputed character, which are the same as *general signs*, and these may be termed *Symbols*." Cp., Peirce 1991: 183 "This explains why there should be three classes of signs; for there is a triple connection of *sign, thing signified, cognition produced in the mind*. There may be a mere relation of reason between the sign and the thing signified; in that case the sign is an *icon*. Or there may be a direct physical connection; in that case, the sign is an *index*. Or there may be a relation which consists in the fact that the mind associates the sign with its object; in that case the sign is a *name*." *Likenesses* and *icons* are terms for signs that represent through similarity of quality (visual or otherwise), whereas a *name* is one kind of *symbol*, which represents through arbitrary or customary association.

since, whether written or spoken, it bears no visual or auditory resemblance to the phenomenon, nor is there any direct or causal relation between the word and the thing. Peirce's terms provide us with a useful vocabulary to make systematic distinctions, even if Plato himself avoided doing so.

Peirce may well have drawn his terminology from the Platonic tradition, for Proclus likewise makes a distinction between *icons* (*eikones*) and *symbols* (*sumbola*), between images that represent through similarity and those that represent indirectly or even through contraries.[10] Icons work through a kind of mimesis, whereas symbols work through analogical reasoning and can thus represent the opposite of what they appear to present—an important point for Proclus in his discussion of the more scandalous elements in Homer.[11]

Proclus is less interested in *how* the process happens, but, in his treatise *On Memory and Recollection*, Aristotle describes the process of recollection as a movement (*kinêsis*) and uses the verb 'to hunt' (*thêreuomen*) for the process by which we move by recollection from one thing to another in the search for the thing to be recollected. Aristotle focuses on the process of recollection as a movement from the present stimulus to the thing being recollected, step by step from sign to signified. He identifies three kinds of steps, to something similar, to something opposite, and to something neighboring.

> And this is exactly why we hunt for the next thing in the chain, starting in our thoughts from the present or from something else, and from something similar, or opposite, or neighboring. By this means recollection occurs.[12]
>
> ARISTOTLE, *de memoria* 451b18–20, trans. SORABJI, modified

10 As Dillon 1976 notes, Proclus is not very systematic in his distinction between *icons* (εἰκόνες) and *symbols* (σύμβολα), but he does repeatedly distinguish between representation through similarity and indirect representation. See also the comments in Lamberton 2012 for the relation of Proclus' theories of signs to Peircean semiotics. Smyth 1999: 57 suggests Peirce's reception of "Neoplatonic elements in the Romantic tradition" deriving from Emerson, but does not make the connection with his categories of signs.

11 Proclus *in Remp.* 86.15–19. In all of these imaginings in the manner of the mythmakers, one thing is designated by another. This is not always through icons representing models; rather, sometimes symbols are used, and the relationship with the things that are indicated exists by virtue of analogy. ἐν πάσαις γὰρ ταῖς τοιαύταις φαντασίαις κατὰ τοὺς μυθοπλάστας ἄλλα ἐξ ἄλλων ἐνδείκνυται, καὶ οὐ τὰ μὲν εἰκόνες, τὰ δὲ παραδείγματα, ὅσα διὰ τούτων σημαίνουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν σύμβολα, τὰ δὲ ἐξ ἀναλογίας ἔχει τὴν πρὸς ταῦτα συμπάθειαν. (trans. Lamberton 2012, modified) Cp. also, 1.77.13–29 and 1.198. 13–24.

12 διὸ καὶ τὸ ἐφεξῆς θηρεύομεν νοήσαντες ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἢ ἄλλου τινός, καὶ ἀφ' ὁμοίου ἢ ἐναντίου ἢ τοῦ σύνεγγυς. διὰ τοῦτο γίγνεται ἡ ἀνάμνησις·

Aristotle illustrates the neighboring (*to suneggus*) with the example of letters in the alphabet, but Plato's chains of association have many more varied kinds of links than these.[13]

Plato uses all of the kinds of image signs that Peirce describes, but, in the discussion between Socrates and Simmias in the *Phaedo*, he is most interested in the process of indirect reasoning from symbol to signified, the movement upon which Aristotle focuses. Someone may be reminded of a horse or a lyre or Simmias by seeing a picture of a horse or a lyre or Simmias (an *icon* in Peircean terms). However, he may also be reminded of Cebes, because Cebes owns the horse or the lyre of which he is seeing the picture or because Cebes is the inseparable friend of Simmias. This is a *symbolic* relation in Peircean terms, just as the name of Cebes may also cause him to recall the man himself. The point here, however, is the chain of indirect relations that can be set up, since someone may be reminded of Cebes by hearing the name of Simmias or even the name of Simmias' horse Buttercup, which makes him think of the horse Buttercup, which is owned by Simmias, who is the friend of Cebes. From the name Buttercup to Cebes is a movement along a symbolic chain by means of recollection. Plato does not, in the *Phaedo*, pursue these chains further, but he does note the the process of recollection is triggered by a sense impression that starts off the chain of associations.

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato likewise features the importance of visual images that begin the process of recollection, but he emphasizes the process of reasoning that enables the recollecter to follow the tracks back to the signified. The recollection moves (*ionta*) by reasoning (*logismô*) from a multiplicity of sense perceptions back to the one thing that unites them, the true reality glimpsed by the soul before its incarnation.

> For a human being must understand according to the so-called form, moving from a multiplicity of perceptions to a unity collected together by reasoning. And this is recollection of those things which our soul beheld once upon a time while it was journeying together with the god and

13 Aristotle's example (452a13–16) suggests that he too might have been thinking of a wide range of possibilities within his three categories. τὸ δ' αἴτιον ὅτι ταχὺ ἀπ' ἄλλου ἐπ' ἄλλο ἔρχονται, οἷον ἀπὸ γάλακτος ἐπὶ λευκόν, ἀπὸ λευκοῦ δ' ἐπ' ἀέρα, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου ἐφ' ὑγρόν, ἀφ' οὗ ἐμνήσθη μετοπώρου, ταύτην ἐπιζητῶν τὴν ὥραν. The reason is that people go quickly from one thing to another, e.g., from milk to white, from white to air, and from this to fluid, from which one remembers autumn.

> looking beyond the things which we now say to exist, and ascending up into the really real.[14]
>
> 249c

This ability to recollect, rather than simply remember, distinguishes humans from animals, as Aristotle also argues, because it is a kind of reasoning.[15] Humans can thus even use their reasoning to fashion the image of an immortal being, even though they have never seen or even adequately conceived of a real god.[16]

Simple visual similarity or imitation is thus not the only way in which a sign can remind the viewer of the signified; the process of recollection involves moving by reasoning from one related thing to another, whether it be from Simmias' horse to Simmias to Cebes or from a particular appearance of beauty to the idea of the beautiful itself. The different kinds of semiotic connections can, I argue, help us to understand how, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato uses the image of the beautiful beloved as a divine statue to illustrate the complex ways in which this process might work—or might go wrong.

3 Treating Him Right

In the palinode, Socrates claims that the visual appearance of beauty provides the most brilliant reminder of the true realities that the soul saw before incarnation, while other things, like justice, provide only dim images.

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14 δεῖ γὰρ ἄνθρωπον συνιέναι κατ᾽ εἶδος λεγόμενον, ἐκ πολλῶν ἰόντ᾽ αἰσθήσεων εἰς ἓν λογισμῷ συναιρούμενον· τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀνάμνησις ἐκείνων ἅ ποτ᾽ εἶδεν ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ συμπορευθεῖσα θεῷ καὶ ὑπεριδοῦσα ἃ νῦν εἶναί φαμεν, καὶ ἀνακύψασα εἰς τὸ ὂν ὄντως. διὸ δὴ δικαίως μόνη πτεροῦται ἡ τοῦ φιλοσόφου διάνοια· πρὸς γὰρ ἐκείνοις ἀεί ἐστιν μνήμῃ κατὰ δύναμιν, πρὸς οἷσπερ θεὸς ὢν θεῖός ἐστιν. τοῖς δὲ δὴ τοιούτοις ἀνὴρ ὑπομνήμασιν ὀρθῶς χρώμενος, τελέους ἀεὶ τελετὰς τελούμενος, τέλεος ὄντως μόνος γίγνεται· I here follow Thompson 1868 in emending ἰὸν to ἰόντ᾽ to keep the ἄνθρωπον as the subject of the process of collection by reasoning, understanding λεγόμενον as a characteristic hedging of terminology when discussing the forms, rather than as the abstract subject of the process of reasoning, 'the thing said'.

15 Cp. Aristotle *de Mem.* 453a8–10. τοῦ μὲν μνημονεύειν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων μετέχει πολλά, τοῦ δ᾽ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι οὐδὲν ὡς εἰπεῖν τῶν γνωριζομένων ζῴων, πλὴν ἄνθρωπος. αἴτιον δ᾽ ὅτι τὸ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαί ἐστιν οἷον συλλογισμός τις· Many other animals share in remembering, while of the known animals one may say that none other than man shares in recollecting. The explanation is that recollection is a sort of reasoning.

16 246cd. But we, though we have never seen or rightly conceived a god, imagine an immortal

> Now, for justice and prudence and all the others revered by souls there is no brightness in the likenesses here, but only a few, approaching the images through the muddled sense organs, behold the nature of that represented, and those only with great difficulty ... But regarding beauty, just as I said earlier, it shone forth among those realities, and since we came hither we have perceived it shining most clearly through the clearest of our senses. For sight is to us the keenest of the perceptions that come through the body. Wisdom is not seen through this, for wisdom would create terribly fierce loves if any such clear image of it were provided coming to the sight, as also would all other such lovely things. But here and now beauty alone has this nature, that it is most clearly apparent and most inspiring of love.[17]
>
> 250b, de

Beauty is thus the image of truth that is most easily approached starting with the senses, so it most easily evokes the madness of eros that drives the lover along the path of recollection.

The image of the divine statue illustrates the correct way for the lover to respond to this stimulus. The philosophic lover selects from among the beautiful youths he sees one who reminds him of the nature of the god he followed before incarnation and treats that youth like a statue of the god.

> Now each one chooses his love from the ranks of the beautiful according to his character, and he fashions him and adorns him like a statue, as though he were his god, to honor and worship him.[18]
>
> 252de

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being which has both a soul and a body which are united for all time. ἀλλὰ πλάττομεν οὔτε ἰδόντες οὔτε ἱκανῶς νοήσαντες θεόν, ἀθάνατόν τι ζῷον, ἔχον μὲν ψυχήν, ἔχον δὲ σῶμα, τὸν ἀεὶ δὲ χρόνον ταῦτα συμπεφυκότα.

17 δικαιοσύνης μὲν οὖν καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τίμια ψυχαῖς οὐκ ἔνεστι φέγγος οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς τῇδε ὁμοιώμασιν, ἀλλὰ δι’ ἀμυδρῶν ὀργάνων μόγις αὐτῶν καὶ ὀλίγοι **ἐπὶ τὰς εἰκόνας ἰόντες** θεῶνται τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος ... περὶ δὲ κάλλους, ὥσπερ εἴπομεν, μετ’ ἐκείνων τε ἔλαμπεν ὄν, δεῦρό τ’ ἐλθόντες κατειλήφαμεν αὐτὸ διὰ τῆς ἐναργεστάτης αἰσθήσεως τῶν ἡμετέρων στίλβον ἐναργέστατα. ὄψις γὰρ ἡμῖν ὀξυτάτη τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔρχεται αἰσθήσεων, ᾗ φρόνησις οὐχ ὁρᾶται—δεινοὺς γὰρ ἂν παρεῖχεν ἔρωτας, εἴ τι τοιοῦτον ἑαυτῆς ἐναργὲς εἴδωλον παρείχετο εἰς ὄψιν ἰόν—καὶ τἆλλα ὅσα ἐραστά· νῦν δὲ κάλλος μόνον ταύτην ἔσχε μοῖραν, ὥστ’ ἐκφανέστατον εἶναι καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον.

18 τόν τε οὖν ἔρωτα τῶν καλῶν πρὸς τρόπου ἐκλέγεται ἕκαστος, καὶ ὡς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον ὄντα ἑαυτῷ οἷον ἄγαλμα τεκταίνεταί τε καὶ κατακοσμεῖ, ὡς τιμήσων τε καὶ ὀργιάσων.

As the anecdote with which we began shows, a lover can behave very badly towards a divine statue, but the philosophic lover treats this image of the god (*agalma*) with honor (*timê*) and religious ritual behavior (*orgia*). This divine statue reminds the lover of the vision of Beauty itself, described as an image sitting upon a statue base; the beautiful beloved as a statue is an image of Beauty as a statue.[19]

What then is the proper way to behave to a divine statue? What honors and rites are appropriate and how should they be conducted? Plato here relies upon his ancient readers' understanding of Greek cult practice, but even modern scholars can pick up on some of the suggestions from the language Plato uses of *orgia* and *teletai*. The appropriate behavior to this image of the divine includes sacrifice, adornment of the image, and, most importantly, following the image as if in a ritual procession.

When the lover sees the beloved, he feels reverence (*sebetai*) and would go beyond that feeling to the action of sacrifice (*thuoi*), if he did not think that such an act would be condemned as madness (*mania*).

> But he who is newly initiated, who beheld many of those realities, when he sees a godlike face or form which is a good image of beauty, shudders at first, and something of the old awe comes over him, then, as he gazes, he reveres the beautiful one as a god, and if he did not fear to be thought stark mad, he would offer sacrifice to his beloved as to an idol or a god.[20]
>
> 251a

Beyond this initial impulse to sacrifice, the lover performs the kind of adornment of statues (*katakosmei*) that was a common element of cult. However, he also fashions (*tektainetai*) the statue to better represent the god. Precisely how a statue is made more like the god is not specified, but the pouring of divine qualities over the soul of the beloved it is compared to the rites of the Bacchai pouring liquids.[21] Our knowledge of ancient ritual does not permit us to

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19 254b ἰδόντος δὲ τοῦ ἡνιόχου ἡ μνήμη πρὸς τὴν τοῦ κάλλους φύσιν ἠνέχθη, καὶ πάλιν εἶδεν αὐτὴν μετὰ σωφροσύνης ἐν ἁγνῷ βάθρῳ βεβῶσαν. And as the charioteer looks upon him, his memory is borne back to the true nature of beauty, and he sees it standing with prudence upon a holy pedestal.

20 ὁ δὲ ἀρτιτελής, ὁ τῶν τότε πολυθεάμων, ὅταν θεοειδὲς πρόσωπον ἴδῃ κάλλος εὖ μεμιμημένον ἤ τινα σώματος ἰδέαν, πρῶτον μὲν ἔφριξε καί τι τῶν τότε ὑπῆλθεν αὐτὸν δειμάτων, εἶτα προσορῶν ὡς θεὸν σέβεται, καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐδεδίει τὴν τῆς σφόδρα μανίας δόξαν, θύοι ἂν ὡς ἀγάλματι καὶ θεῷ τοῖς παιδικοῖς.

21 253ab καὶ τούτων δὴ τὸν ἐρώμενον αἰτιώμενοι ἔτι τε μᾶλλον ἀγαπῶσι, κἂν ἐκ Διὸς ἀρύτωσιν

understand the ritual to which this metaphor refers, but we have testimonies to various other rituals that involve the *kosmesis* of the statue of the god, whether providing it with washing and anointing it, new garments, or decorating it with jewelry or other precious items.[22] The adornments and purifications serve to increase the material statue's likeness to the divine entity which it represents, just as the lover's treatment of the beloved increases the likeness to the divinity their souls follow; they are both kinds of assimilation of something in the mortal realm to the divine. This project of assimilation to the divine appears elsewhere in the Platonic dialogues as the ultimate goal of the philosophic life, so the image of the interactions with the beautiful beloved as performing such rituals with the statue of the god serves to illustrate with the familiar ritual actions both the erotic relationship and the philosophic life of which it is a part.[23]

ὥσπερ αἱ βάκχαι, ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου ψυχὴν ἐπαντλοῦντες **ποιοῦσιν** ὡς δυνατὸν **ὁμοιότατον τῷ σφετέρῳ** θεῷ. Now they consider the beloved the cause of all this, so they love him more than before, and if they draw the waters of their inspiration from Zeus, like the bacchantes, they pour it out upon the beloved and make him, so far as possible, like their god.

22 The Plynteria at Athens involved taking the adornments off the statue of Athena Polias, purifying them and washing the statue (the festival also included a procession). The Panathenaia procession brought a new peplos each year to adorn the statue of Athena on the acropolis. Cp. Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, esp. 214–219. Sourvinou-Inwood also discusses rites for Artemis of Ephesos, where the ritual procession involved the services of a *kosmophoros*, someone who carried the jewelry and other adornments, as well as a *kosmeteira*, an official whose duty it was to care for the adorning. (Sourvinou-Inwood 2011: 184, with n. 162). The Neoplatonist commentator Hermias discusses how the consecration of an image makes it more divine (*in Plat. Phaedrum*, p. 87. 4–12 Couvreur): "But how can an image also be said to be inspired? Perhaps the thing itself cannot respond actively to the divine, inasmuch as it is without life; but the art of consecration purifies its matter, and, by attaching certain marks and symbols to the image, first gives it a soul by these means, and makes it capable of receiving a kind of life from the universe, thereafter preparing it to receive illumination from Divinity." Πῶς δὲ καὶ ἄγαλμα λέγεται ἐνθουσιᾶν; Ἢ αὐτὸ μὲν οὐκ ἐνεργεῖ περὶ τὸ θεῖον, ὅ γε ἄψυχόν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ὕλην ἡ τελεστικὴ διακαθήρασα καί τινας χαρακτῆρας καὶ σύμβολα περιθεῖσα τῷ ἀγάλματι πρῶτον μὲν ἔμψυχον αὐτὸ διὰ τούτων ἐποίησε καὶ ⟨οἷόν τε⟩ ζωήν τινα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου καταδέξασθαι, ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο ἐλλαμφθῆναι παρὰ τοῦ θείου αὐτὸ παρεσκεύασεν· ὅπερ ἄγαλμα ἀεὶ χρηματίζει ἕως δύνανται δέχεσθαι οἱ ἐπιτήδειοι· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἄγαλμα ὡς ἂν τελεσθῇ μένει ἐφεξῆς ἕως ἂν πάντῃ ἀνεπιτήδειον γένηται πρὸς τὴν θεῶν ἔλλαμψιν·

23 ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν *Tht.* 176b; cp. *Rep.* 613b εἰς ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ ὁμοιοῦσθαι θεῷ. See also *Tim.* 90ce. Cp. Sedley 1999 for this tradition, as well as Annas 1999: 52–71 for a discussion of the place of this assimilation to the divine in Platonic ethics. See also van Riel in this volume for the relation to making images. Morgan 2012 approaches this issue from the angle of divine possession or inspiration (*enthousiasmos*), showing how Plato in

Another ritual action that appears as part of the lover's interaction with the beloved statue is the common ritual of the festive procession that follows in the train of the divine image. Like sacrifice or adorning the statue, such a procession was a part of many different rituals, and the imagery of the discarnate souls following the divinity at the head of the procession through the cosmos to the hyperouranian realm would surely recall such ritual processions for Plato's readers.[24] On earth, the lover likewise follows in the footsteps of the god, but he does so through the process of recollection, discovering within himself the traces that lead him back by memory to the vision of the divine.

> Following the tracks back from within themselves to find the nature of their god, they succeed on their way, because they have been compelled to keep their eyes fixed upon the god, and as they reach and grasp him by memory they are inspired and receive from him character and habits, so far as it is possible for a man to have part in the divine. Now they consider the beloved the cause of all this, so they love him more than before, and if they draw the waters of their inspiration from Zeus, like the bacchantes, they pour it out upon the beloved and make him, so far as possible, like their god.[25]
>
> 253ab

This movement back along the tracks (*ichneuontes*) by memory not only recalls following the gods in the heavens, but also the movement in the recollection process from manifold sense perceptions by reasoning to the unity in 249c. It is also echoed in Socrates' later comment of the way he behaves when he encounters someone who understands the logical processes of collection and division.

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the *Phaedrus* reworks ideas of the passive possessed poet into a more active process of reflection and incorporation of the divine.

24 Parke 1977: 22–23 notes the importance of processions in many festivals, including the massive celebrations of the Panathenaia and the procession to Eleusis for the Mysteries. He notes as well the parody in Aristophanes *Ecclesiazeusai* 730ff., to which might be added the parody of the Dionysiac phallic processions in the *Archarnians* 241–263. For an overview of festival processions in textual and visual evidence, see True, et al. 2004.

25 ἰχνεύοντες δὲ παρ' ἑαυτῶν ἀνευρίσκειν τὴν τοῦ σφετέρου θεοῦ φύσιν εὐποροῦσι διὰ τὸ συντόνως ἠναγκάσθαι πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλέπειν, καὶ ἐφαπτόμενοι αὐτοῦ τῇ μνήμῃ ἐνθουσιῶντες ἐξ ἐκείνου λαμβάνουσι τὰ ἔθη καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, καθ' ὅσον δυνατὸν θεοῦ ἀνθρώπῳ μετασχεῖν· καὶ τούτων δὴ τὸν ἐρώμενον αἰτιώμενοι ἔτι τε μᾶλλον ἀγαπῶσι, κἂν ἐκ Διὸς ἀρύτωσιν ὥσπερ αἱ βάκχαι, ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου ψυχὴν ἐπαντλοῦντες ποιοῦσιν ὡς δυνατὸν ὁμοιότατον τῷ σφετέρῳ θεῷ.

> Now I myself, Phaedrus, am a lover of these processes of division and collection, so that I may be able to speak and to think; and if I consider any other man able to see things that can naturally be collected into one and divided into many, I follow that one and "walk in his track as if he were a god."[26]
>
> 266b

The repetition of the term for track (*ichnion*) links these passages, as the process of recollection by means of collection and division is given illustration with the image of the ritual procession. The proper way to use the vision of the beautiful beloved is like following the image of a god in a procession, moving along the path marked out by the movement of the god to the final destination, where the final rituals, the *teletai*, are performed. Such rituals are indeed the final reward of the one who makes proper use of recollection, "Indeed a man who employs such memories rightly is always being initiated into perfect mysteries and he alone becomes truly perfect."[27]

4 Treating Him Wrong

The rewards of those who use recollection rightly are thus like the joys of celebrating the most perfect festivals, but Plato also illustrates the fate of those who use recollection wrongly. Just as one can treat a statue of a god improperly, so too one can treat the beautiful beloved or other image of the divine improperly. In contrast to the perfectly initiated philosopher, the one whose extraordinary experience of the divine was long ago and only imperfectly preserved may fail to make the connection between the image of beauty before him and the vision of divine beauty before incarnation.

> Now he who is not newly initiated, or has been corrupted, is not borne swiftly back thither from here toward the beautiful itself when he sees

26 Τούτων δὴ ἔγωγε αὐτός τε ἐραστής, ὦ Φαῖδρε, τῶν διαιρέσεων καὶ συναγωγῶν, ἵνα οἷός τε ὦ λέγειν τε καὶ φρονεῖν· ἐάν τέ τιν' ἄλλον ἡγήσωμαι δυνατὸν εἰς ἓν καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰ πεφυκόθ' ὁρᾶν, τοῦτον διώκω "κατόπισθε μετ' ἴχνιον ὥστε θεοῖο." The dactylic verse resembles several Homeric lines (*Odyssey* 2.406, 3.30, 5.193, 7.38, as well as *Iliad* 22.157), but may be an ad hoc improvisation rather than a quotation from a hexameter source no longer extant.

27 249c τοῖς δὲ δὴ τοιούτοις ἀνὴρ ὑπομνήμασιν ὀρθῶς χρώμενος, τελέους ἀεὶ τελετὰς τελούμενος, τέλεος ὄντως μόνος γίγνεται· No English translation can capture the word play of "τελέους ἀεὶ τελετὰς τελούμενος, τέλεος"—perfect, eternally perfected in perfect perfections.

> the namesake of it here, with the result that, when he sees it, he does not worship it, but rather abandoning himself to pleasure he attempts to mount like a four-footed beast and to beget children, and consorting with hubris he neither fears nor is ashamed in his pursuit of pleasure against nature.[28]
>
> 250e

Because he is not moved from this earthly world back to the divine (*ouk oxeôs enthende ekeise pheretai*), he fails to treat the image reverently, and so his reaction to beauty is not true erotic madness but simply bestial lust. The graphic description of the horse attempting to have sex with the statue, the divine image that the beautiful beloved presents, represents this improper reaction. The dark horse tries to leap upon the beloved (*epipêdan tô erômenô*), dragging his unwilling yokemate and the charioteer along, forcing them to approach the beloved and jogging their memory about the pleasures of sex.[29] Note the use of a memory related term here (*mneian*); the improper reaction to the beautiful beloved resembles the proper reaction, but leads back by memory to the wrong object—sexual pleasure—rather than the correct one.[30]

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28 ὁ μὲν οὖν μὴ νεοτελὴς ἢ διεφθαρμένος οὐκ ὀξέως ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε φέρεται πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ κάλλος, θεώμενος αὐτοῦ τὴν τῇδε ἐπωνυμίαν, ὥστ' οὐ σέβεται προσορῶν, ἀλλ' ἡδονῇ παραδοὺς τετράποδος νόμον βαίνειν ἐπιχειρεῖ καὶ παιδοσπορεῖν, καὶ ὕβρει προσομιλῶν οὐ δέδοικεν οὐδ' αἰσχύνεται παρὰ φύσιν ἡδονὴν διώκων. Although παρὰ φύσιν ἡδονὴν has been taken to indicate Plato's disapproval of homosexual activity, the passage makes much more sense when understood as a reference to the dark horse's attempt to assault the statue, truly an act παρὰ φύσιν. The reference to παιδοσπορεῖν in any case rules out a critique of pederasty in particular; see Nussbaum 1999: 189–192.

29 254a. Now whenever the charioteer beholds the love-inspiring vision, and his whole soul is warmed by the perception, and is full of the tickling and prickings of yearning, the horse that is obedient the charioteer, constrained then as always by modesty, controls himself and does not leap upon the beloved; but the other no longer heeds the pricks or the whip of the charioteer, but springs wildly forward, causing all possible trouble to his mate and to the charioteer, and he forces them to go toward the beloved and to make for themselves a reminder of the pleasure of sex. ὅταν δ' οὖν ὁ ἡνίοχος ἰδὼν τὸ ἐρωτικὸν ὄμμα, πᾶσαν αἰσθήσει διαθερμήνας τὴν ψυχήν, γαργαλισμοῦ τε καὶ πόθου κέντρων ὑποπλησθῇ, ὁ μὲν εὐπειθὴς τῷ ἡνιόχῳ τῶν ἵππων, ἀεί τε καὶ τότε αἰδοῖ βιαζόμενος, ἑαυτὸν κατέχει μὴ ἐπιπηδᾶν τῷ ἐρωμένῳ· ὁ δὲ οὔτε κέντρων ἡνιοχικῶν οὔτε μάστιγος ἔτι ἐντρέπεται, σκιρτῶν δὲ βίᾳ φέρεται, καὶ πάντα πράγματα παρέχων τῷ σύζυγί τε καὶ ἡνιόχῳ ἀναγκάζει ἰέναι τε πρὸς τὰ παιδικὰ καὶ μνείαν ποιεῖσθαι τῆς τῶν ἀφροδισίων χάριτος.

30 Cp. Morgan 2000: 218 on this point.

The result of this improper treatment is the complete contrast to the blissful life of the initiate. Rather than experiencing the initiates' joys of the festivals in the proximity of the gods, the one who engages in sex with the statue suffers the torments that the Greek mythic and religious tradition reserved for the restless dead, 'to roam around the earth for nine thousand years and then he will go off below the earth, a mindless shade.'[31] This language echoes the fate described for the unphilosophic in the *Phaedo*, where the comparison with the unburied or uninitiated restless dead is developed at greater length.[32]

5 Rhetoric and Writing as Images of Truth

The same contrast between proper and improper treatment of an image appears in the second half of the *Phaedrus*, where the image in question is not the beautiful beloved who provokes the recollection of the divine beauty, but a rhetorical speech that leads the souls of those who receive it. Just as the sight of the beautiful beloved leads the lover's soul in the path of the divine image back to the vision of truth, so too a rhetorical speech can lead the soul of the hearer toward the truth—or lead him astray.

Socrates defines rhetoric as a kind of soul-leading through words, and this action of leading works through the making of resemblances between things, linking their images together.

> Is not rhetoric in its entire nature an art which leads the soul by means of words? … it would be the art by which a man will be able to produce a resemblance between all things between which it can be produced, and to bring to the light the resemblances produced and disguised by anyone else.[33]
>
> 261a, 261e

This process of *psychagogia* happens through the power of *logos*,[34] both speech and reasoning, just as Socrates is led out into the countryside by the *logoi* that Phaedrus promises him. This leading of the soul, however, is inherently neither

31 257a. ἐννέα χιλιάδας ἐτῶν περὶ γῆν κυλινδουμένην αὐτὴν καὶ ὑπὸ γῆς ἄνουν παρέξει.

32 Cp. Edmonds 2004: 184–195.

33 τὸ μὲν ὅλον ἡ ῥητορικὴ ἂν εἴη τέχνη ψυχαγωγία τις διὰ λόγων; αὕτη ἂν εἴη, ᾗ τις οἷός τ' ἔσται πᾶν παντὶ ὁμοιοῦν τῶν δυνατῶν καὶ οἷς δυνατόν, καὶ ἄλλου ὁμοιοῦντος καὶ ἀποκρυπτομένου εἰς φῶς ἄγειν.

34 271d. λόγου δύναμις τυγχάνει ψυχαγωγία οὖσα. It is the function of speech to lead souls.

good nor bad; it all depends on how it is done.[35] The correct method involves knowing how, through the processes of collection and division, to move to the truth, and how to adorn the *logos* to address the particular soul.

> A man must know the truth about all the particular things of which he speaks or writes, and must be able to define everything separately; then when he has defined them, he must know how to divide them by classes until further division is impossible; and in the same way he must understand the nature of the soul, must find out the class of speech adapted to each nature, and must arrange and adorn his discourse accordingly.[36]
>
> 277bc

The rhetorical *logos* is adorned (*diakosmêi*) like the statue of the divine, since both provide an image of the truth that the soul can follow through the process of recollection. This process takes place through the same collections and divisions that Socrates has already claimed are necessary for the soul to reason back through memory from the sense perception of beauty to the unitary divine Beauty (249c), the step by step movement of recollection that moves, not physically but through reason. These steps may be, as Aristotle suggested, from similar to similar or from opposite to opposite, or they may be simply from one thing to another that is somehow associated with it, like Cebes and his horse. You may recall that Socrates claims that he follows in the tracks of one who understands such collections and divisions like a god; recollection is a process of reasoning that follows the tracks, the signs of the movement along the path, back to truth.

The process is the same whether the word is spoken or written, since the written word is merely an image of the spoken word, an image of an image of

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35 Cp. 258d; 277de.

36 πρὶν ἄν τις τό τε ἀληθὲς ἑκάστων εἰδῇ πέρι ὧν λέγει ἢ γράφει, κατ' αὐτό τε πᾶν ὁρίζεσθαι δυνατὸς γένηται, ὁρισάμενός τε πάλιν κατ' εἴδη μέχρι τοῦ ἀτμήτου τέμνειν ἐπιστηθῇ, περί τε ψυχῆς φύσεως διιδὼν κατὰ ταὐτά, τὸ προσαρμόττον ἑκάστῃ φύσει εἶδος ἀνευρίσκων, οὕτω τιθῇ καὶ διακοσμῇ τὸν λόγον. Cp. 273de. ἐὰν μή τις τῶν τε ἀκουσομένων τὰς φύσεις διαριθμήσηται, καὶ κατ' εἴδη τε διαιρεῖσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ μιᾷ ἰδέᾳ δυνατὸς ᾖ καθ' ἓν ἕκαστον περιλαμβάνειν, οὔ ποτ' ἔσται τεχνικὸς λόγων πέρι καθ' ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ. Unless a man take account of the characters of his hearers and is able to divide things by classes and to comprehend particulars under a general idea, he will never attain the highest human perfection in the art of speech.

an image of the truth.[37] Socrates and Phaedrus thus agree that writing is a kind of ritual play, like creating the gardens of Adonis for the festival.[38]

> The gardens in letters he will, it seems, sow for amusement, and will write, when he does write, to treasure up reminders for himself, when he comes to the forgetfulness of old age, and for every other who goes along the same track.[39]
>
> 276d

Once again, the process is described as following a track (*ichnos*), but it serves as a reminder, something that counters forgetfulness, just as the *pharmakon* against forgetting that Theuth devises.[40]

A *pharmakon*, however, can either be a wondrous magic potion or a dreadful poison, working good or harm. Just as Thamus raises doubts about the invention of Theuth, so too the process of soul-leading through speeches may be good or bad. If the soul is led to truth, it is good, but if the *psychagogia* does not lead the soul to truth, then it is evil. Socrates right at the beginning of the dialogue claims that Phaedrus has found the *pharmakon* to lead him anywhere, speeches in books, but it is not clear where Lysias' speech may lead them.[41]

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37 276a8–9. τὸν τοῦ εἰδότος λόγον λέγεις ζῶντα καὶ ἔμψυχον, οὗ ὁ γεγραμμένος εἴδωλον ἄν τι λέγοιτο δικαίως. You mean the living and breathing word of him who knows, of which the written word may justly be called the image. In 264c, a speech is compared to a body. δεῖν πάντα λόγον ὥσπερ ζῷον συνεστάναι σῶμά τι ἔχοντα αὐτὸν αὑτοῦ, ὥστε μήτε ἀκέφαλον εἶναι μήτε ἄπουν, ἀλλὰ μέσα τε ἔχειν καὶ ἄκρα, πρέποντα ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ γεγραμμένα. Every discourse must be organized, like a living being, with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to be headless or footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and to the whole. Cp. also the idea that bodies of the dead are *eidola* of the person, while the real thing is the soul, in *Laws* 959b4.

38 276b.

39 ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν ἐν γράμμασι κήπους, ὡς ἔοικε, παιδιᾶς χάριν σπερεῖ τε καὶ γράψει, ὅταν δὲ γράφῃ, ἑαυτῷ τε ὑπομνήματα θησαυριζόμενος, εἰς τὸ λήθης γῆρας ἐὰν ἵκηται, καὶ παντὶ τῷ ταὐτὸν **ἴχνος** μετιόντι.

40 274e. μνήμης τε γὰρ καὶ σοφίας φάρμακον ηὑρέθη. For I have discovered a magic potion for memory and wisdom.

41 230de. σὺ μέντοι δοκεῖς μοι τῆς ἐμῆς ἐξόδου τὸ **φάρμακον** ηὑρηκέναι. ὥσπερ γὰρ οἱ τὰ πεινῶντα θρέμματα θαλλὸν ἤ τινα καρπὸν προσσείοντες **ἄγουσιν**, σὺ ἐμοὶ λόγους οὕτω προτείνων ἐν βιβλίοις τήν τε Ἀττικὴν φαίνῃ **περιάξειν** ἅπασαν καὶ ὅποι ἂν ἄλλοσε βούλῃ. But you seem to have found the charm to bring me out. For as people lead hungry animals by shaking in front of them a branch of leaves or some fruit, just so, I think, you, by holding before me discourses in books, will lead me all over Attica and wherever else you please.

Socrates, it is true, is dazzled after the speech, not, however, by the speech itself, but rather by the vision of the beautiful Phaedrus, with whom he joins in bacchic revels.

> More than that, it is miraculous, my friend; I am quite overcome by it. And this is due to you, Phaedrus, because as I looked at you, I saw that you were delighted by the speech as you read. So, thinking that you know more than I about such matters, I followed in your train and joined you in the divine frenzy.[42]
>
> 234d

Phaedrus, by contrast, fails to realize that the speech itself is a problem, that it leads not to truth but to the merely apparent or probable (*to eikos*), like the speeches of other unscrupulous rhetoricians in the lawcourts.[43]

Such speeches lead the soul along the path in the same manner as philosophic speeches, step by step through associations, but 'praising the "shadow of an ass" under the name of a horse', associating the good elements of a horse—its value at home and for fighting in war—with a mere image of something that only appears somewhat like a horse.[44] And, as Socrates points out, misleading someone to think an ass is a horse is merely absurd, but misleading a city to think that evil is good is a serious problem.

Phaedrus' real problem, however, is less that he is enchanted by the conclusions to which Lysias' speech leads him than that he looks upon the speech itself as a delight (*agalma*) and source of pleasure.[45] Rather than use the speech as a stimulus to move to new conclusions through reasoning, as Socrates induces him to do, he had intended to spend the day memorizing it word for word so that he could fix it in his mind. His eros for *logoi* is like the nameless youth's desire for the statue, a misguided response to the stimulus of beauty of form. Although he gushes enthusiastically that "nobody could ever speak about

42 δαιμονίως μὲν οὖν, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ὥστε με ἐκπλαγῆναι. καὶ τοῦτο ἐγὼ ἔπαθον διὰ σέ, ὦ Φαῖδρε, πρὸς σὲ ἀποβλέπων, ὅτι ἐμοὶ ἐδόκεις γάνυσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου μεταξὺ ἀναγιγνώσκων· ἡγούμενος γὰρ σὲ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐμὲ ἐπαΐειν περὶ τῶν τοιούτων σοὶ εἱπόμην, καὶ ἑπόμενος συνεβάκχευσα μετὰ σοῦ τῆς θείας κεφαλῆς.

43 272e τὸ παράπαν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις τούτων ἀληθείας μέλειν οὐδενί, ἀλλὰ τοῦ πιθανοῦ· τοῦτο δ' εἶναι τὸ εἰκός. For in the courts, they say, nobody cares for truth about these matters, but for that which is convincing; and that is probability.

44 260c. περὶ ὄνου σκιᾶς ὡς ἵππου τὸν ἔπαινον ποιούμενος.

45 Although note the arguments of Nussbaum 1986 for reasons that Lysias' conclusions might also appeal to Phaedrus.

it more exhaustively or worthily" than Lysias has done, he becomes even more excited at the idea that Socrates might offer him something better, even threatening in jest to engage in sexual assault if he does not get what he wants. "We are alone in a solitary spot, and I am stronger than you and younger; so, under these circumstances, take my meaning, and be persuaded, not under compulsion but willingly, to speak."[46]

All along, however, Socrates has a different plan in mind, a joint ritual celebration like the metaphorical one of the two lovers in the palinode. Not only does he claim to have been a fellow bacchic reveler with Phaedrus at end of the speech, but he pretends from the beginning that such was Phaedrus' intent as well. "And meeting the man who is sick with the love of discourse, he was glad when he saw him, because he would have someone to share his Korybantic revel, and told him to lead on."[47] The wild ecstatic festivities of the Bacchic and Korybantic rites would be, in the terms of the palinode, kinds of telestic madness, but they also recall the ritual celebrations of the Adonis festival to which writing is likened, as well as the ritual celebrations and processions in the train of the gods and their images.

6 Conclusions

Throughout the dialogue, then, Plato draws the contrast between Socrates' and Phaedrus' treatment of images, first and foremost the image of writing, but also their attitudes towards erotic relations with the visible image of beauty in the world. The graphic scene of the dark horse trying to have sex with the beloved statue serves as a vivid image of how not to treat an image, to satisfy one's desire with the symbol rather than continuing along the path toward truth. This image illustrates what happens when someone like Phaedrus idolizes Lysias' speech or when anyone substitutes writing for the recollection of truths. By contrast, the proper use of writing is to treat it as a playful ritual that leads beyond itself. In the image of the myth, the lover likewise celebrates rituals around the statue

46 235b. παρὰ τὰ ἐκείνῳ εἰρημένα μηδέν' ἄν ποτε δύνασθαι εἰπεῖν ἄλλα πλείω καὶ πλείονος ἄξια. 236d. ἐσμὲν δὲ μόνω ἐν ἐρημίᾳ, ἰσχυρότερος δ' ἐγὼ καὶ νεώτερος, ἐκ δὲ ἁπάντων τούτων 'σύνες ὅ τοι λέγω,' καὶ μηδαμῶς πρὸς βίαν βουληθῇς μᾶλλον ἢ ἑκὼν λέγειν. Note how Phaedrus holds back the punchline, as it were, of the joke until the ends of the phrases. "I am stronger than you … and younger", rather than older and stronger, as an adult erastes would be. Likewise, he saves the verb 'to speak' until the end, to substitute for χαρίζεσθαι or some such verb.

47 228c. ἀπαντήσας δὲ τῷ νοσοῦντι περὶ λόγων ἀκοήν, ἰδὼν μέν, ἰδών, ἥσθη ὅτι ἕξοι τὸν συγκορυβαντιῶντα, καὶ προάγειν ἐκέλευε.

of his beloved, honoring the memory of the god whom he was following to truth in the heavens. The process of recollection is a process of moving through memory from particulars towards the divine truth of which they are the images, and so important is this art that Socrates will follow in the tracks of the one performing it like a god.[48]

The tracks (*ichnê*) are the signs which the lover follows in the process of recollection, which raises again the question of how Plato sees the relation of the image to the thing it represents. The stain on the statue's thigh is a track (*ichnos*) that indicates the misguided lover who created it. Like the tracks (*ichnê*) left behind in a written speech for readers to follow, such a sign may be considered an index in Peircean terms; that is, they do not directly resemble the things they signify but they indicate its existence and lead the way back toward it through a process of reasoning.[49] So too, the tracks that the lover follows from the vision of the beautiful boy are indices of the divine beauty, and it is worth considering whether the Peircean index may be a useful way to think about the relation between what Plato sometimes calls Forms and the particulars. The Beautiful itself leaves its tracks in the physical appearance of someone or thing, just as Justice leaves its tracks in a law or custom. Beauty's tracks are easier to see and to follow, however; the footprints of Justice are delicate and faint. Socrates always seeks to follow such tracks in his philosophical discourses, leading both himself and his interlocutors step by discursive step toward those originals that left the impressions.

Throughout the dialogue, Plato poses the problem of the image, how it can be used improperly for immediate gratification or properly for recollection. The vivid image of the dark horse's attempted assault picks up on the theme of *agalmatophilia* in Greek culture, providing a striking image of the wrong way to treat an image, while images of ritual celebration point to the proper

48 The Neoplatonist Olympiodorus shows he has picked up on the message: *in Gorgiam* 47.5. Καὶ μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι οἱ φιλόσοφοι λίθους τιμῶσι καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα ὡς θεῖα· ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ κατ' αἴσθησιν ζῶντες οὐ δυνάμεθα ἐφικέσθαι τῆς ἀσωμάτου καὶ ἀύλου δυνάμεως, πρὸς ὑπόμνησιν ἐκείνων τὰ εἴδωλα ἐπινενόηται, ἵνα ὁρῶντες ταῦτα καὶ προσκυνοῦντες εἰς ἔννοιαν ἐρχώμεθα τῶν ἀσωμάτων καὶ ἀύλων δυνάμεων. And do not think that philosophers honor stones and images as divine. But, because we live in the sensory world and are not able to reach up to the bodiless and immaterial power, we have devised for ourselves images as a reminder of those things, so that by seeing them and doing reverence to them we may come to a notion of those bodiless and immaterial powers.

49 One of Peirce's favorite examples of the index is indeed the footprint in the sand by which Robinson Crusoe learns that some other person has come onto his deserted island; cp. Peirce 1991: 252.

treatment of an image. An image, be it a vision of a beautiful beloved or a beautifully crafted speech, sets the soul in motion, leading it along the path. After their discussion by the banks of the Ilissus, then, what path will Socrates and Phaedrus take? What path Plato's readers? The questions of whence and whither continue to haunt the dialogue, from its opening lines to its final 'let's go'.

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Images of Oneself in Plato

Christopher Moore

1 Introduction

This chapter addresses Plato's deployment of what I call the aspirational image. In various dialogues, Socrates offers to his interlocutors a picture of a sort of person they might emulate, at least in some ways. He helps his interlocutors reformulate a question that has no ready solution, 'who am I?,' as a question that points the way to an answer, 'who am I striving to be?' The positing of an image of oneself is especially important for responding to the Delphic precept that occurs repeatedly in Plato: 'Know yourself'.[1] What counts as 'yourself' cannot simply be found; it must be decided upon. Images facilitate this process.

This paper argues for the crucial importance of images of oneself for one's maturation as a good person. They are not a second-best solution; they do not suit only the non-philosopher; their incomplete resemblance to some truth of the matter is not unfortunate. When it comes to self-improvement, a person must have a picture of the self to improve, and this picture consolidates a complex of values, skills, and characteristics. That image you have for yourself delimits what counts as the self to be improved. The self is not to be discovered but determined. An efficient and coherent articulation of this self-determining idea is as an image of somebody to be.[2] We see examples of this kind of aspirational image, both positive and negative, throughout Plato's dialogues. In his *Protagoras*, Plato makes use of the figures of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and a personified discussion; in his *Phaedrus*, of the image of Typhon. The problematic results of ignoring images are explored in the *Charmides*, and Plato provides more reflections on the matter in general in the *Alcibiades* with the image of the eyes reflected in the eyes of another. Of course the images in Plato's dialogues are meant to appeal largely to their characters, ancient Greek men who grew up in an imaginative world populated by these mythic

1 *Phdr.* 229e, *Chrm.* 164d, *Prot.* 343b, *Phlb.* 48c, *Alc.* 124a, 129a, 132c, *Laws* 923a.

2 Velleman (2002) makes this argument in the idiom of contemporary moral psychology. The idea of a 'practical identity', found in, e.g., Korsgaard (1996) and Lear (2011), as the self-conception by which one comes to value certain activities and ways of self-reflection, is also closely connected, though neither author considers the imaginative and even fabulistic self-conceptions that Plato puts forward.

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personages. For us, the readers, Plato uses another image of a self to aspire to be: Socrates. Before turning to these specific images I expand the argument for the importance of images.

2 Self-Images for Self-Knowledge

An image of selfhood seems especially valuable when responding to the Delphic precept, 'Know yourself'.[3] It is difficult to know what this means, and specifically what this 'self' is that one is to know. Action needs a target. An image of the self helps pick out that target. It is not that the image gives a bigger target, or, conversely, that the original is a too-small target; this is the sort of issue we might see in the *Republic* in the soul and city analogy.[4] The reason we need an image of the self for 'knowing yourself' is that the original is not by itself targetable. This is because, in some sense, it has no identity, or unity, or boundary, until an image posits it. The original becomes conceivable by being what the image imagines.

We construct this image, and thereby direct ourselves in constituting our selves, in response to some charge, some claim against us or some other reason to bear the 'self' in mind. In the case of the Delphic precept, at the moment of being told to know yourself, you wonder: what is this self I am to know? The grammar does not help me: reflexives swing back on their subject, but not in any complete or deterministic way.[5] I wash myself by washing only my skin; I cite myself by citing only my articles. The only hint I have about the content of the reflexive comes from the verb. In washing, I must wash some of whatever is washable; in citing, I must cite some of whatever is citable. So in knowing myself, I must know whatever of me is knowable. But a lot about me is knowable. So unless we accuse the Delphic precept 'know yourself' of assigning busy-work, it must charge you to know only a subset of the knowable things. But which ones? We need an image to pick out a region of the knowable things to count as the knowable self. The image, as it were, establishes—through a sort of partitioning—the self as a thing I might productively know.

This very rough idea of 'partitioning' is important. It is not the case that you create yourself at the moment you take the Delphic *gnôthi sauton* seriously.

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3 On Plato and the Delphic precept, see Moore (2015a).

4 For recent discussion of the relevant 'image' for justice at *Rep*. II.368d, see White (1979), 83; Benardete (1989), 45–46; Santas (2010), 56–58; Scott (2015), 15–18.

5 Jeremiah (2012) discusses the use Greek authors make of the reflexive pronouns in the classical period.

Plato presumably does not think that selfhood is a *mere* or *utter* fiction or matter of convention.[6] You could just as much create your visible self at the moment you take someone's 'Just look at yourself' seriously, or take your visible self to be merely conventional. What you do instead is decide what counts as yourself. I might decide that the 'yourself' of 'just look at yourself' refers to your way of acting around other people—perhaps, on some occasion, too enthusiastically; after all, this way of being is a way that someone might want you to monitor and curtail. So too the 'yourself' of 'know yourself' depends on the sort of thing *worth* knowing. Once you posit an image of the sort of thing you could conceivably know, then you can proceed to try to know whatever it is your image points to—in Plato's case, more or less fantastically.

This is the argument that an image is important: it is important to obey the Delphic injunction, and an image allows you to come up with something to aid your discharge of that obligation. You might think that we do not need an image, because people really do know, through context, what the knowable self is. Yet Plato's dialogues suggest otherwise. Alcibiades, in the *Alcibiades*, says that he thought that the 'self' must be something really easy to know, but also that it must be something really difficult to know (129a5–6). Since he gives no reason for supposing that he has two starkly different standards for knowing, a loose and an austere one, we must assume that he has two ideas about the 'self'. On one image of the self, it is really easy to know it; this is probably an image of oneself as the most important differentiating characteristic: in Alcibiades' case, his desire and good position for world-domination (124a8–b6). On another picture, the self is something else that vindicates the pride of place the injunction has in Greek wisdom. In a parallel and contemporaneous case, Xenophon's Euthydemus assures Socrates that he did not think that knowing oneself means knowing his name (*Mem.* 4.2.24); but this denial admits the possibility of thinking that one's self is one's name, or perhaps more plausibly, one's reputation or public appearance. In any case, Socrates suggests that the Delphic inscription must mean something other by 'self' than Euthydemus, even on reflection, supposes.

There is another way that this argument for the importance of an image for the self might seem counterintuitive: if you identify the self with the soul, and you hear 'know yourself' as 'know your soul'.[7] If we were to so hear it, knowing yourself would simply take knowing certain properties of the soul worth our attention. This might not require images. As far as the soul's immortality is

6 Cairns in this collection shows, however, that Plato does not exactly argue for the opposite.

7 Gerson (2003) helpfully discusses the difference between self and soul in Plato.

concerned, for example, an image does not seem necessary, only some evidence or an argument (e.g., *Phdr.* 245c6–246a2 and throughout the *Phaedo*). As far as the rational and non-rational aspects of the soul are concerned, an image might be rhetorically convenient but not strictly essential, if we had some examples of human action explicable only in terms of several parts of the soul. What is remarkable, however, is that in the instances where Socrates talks about the *gnôthi sauton*, the soul is never the immediate or explicit object of discussion. There is no doubt that whatever language one ends up using in talk about self-knowledge, that language should be connected to language of the soul. But that is a subsequent, not immediate, task.

I now turn to examples—some images—to illustrate my point and defend my argument.

3 Prometheus

At the end of the *Protagoras*, Socrates claims to use the image of Prometheus—the one Protagoras set out in his opening lecture—somehow to motivate, guide, or underwrite his commitment to self-development. He mentions this image in the context of his wish to keep pursuing the nature of virtue with Protagoras. His interlocutor's and listeners' commitments to that pursuit have just undergone abuse that might cause them to recede, for good reason. In one respect, Socrates' conversational method has just triumphed, forcing Protagoras to admit that courage is a kind of knowledge (360e6), and thus that all the virtues are basically alike (cf. 349d4). Socrates had wanted to defend the unity of the virtues.[8] But he had also wanted to defend the impossibility of teaching virtue (319b3).[9] Yet since presumably every kind of knowledge is teachable, and all the virtues are knowledge—that is, if all the virtues are like courage, which is shown to be a kind of knowledge—then the virtues are in fact teachable. So Socrates' conversational method failed, undermining the very thesis from which it began. It is no consolation that this reveals a problem in Protagoras' original position, that virtues are teachable but that not all of them are knowledge. It plays to Protagoras' advantage: he now accepts a consistent position.

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8 On the imagery Socrates uses to do this, but also his reluctance to commit to any particular vision of the unity of virtues, see O'Brien (2003).

9 This he argued from two social, not epistemological observations: that nobody expects experts in virtue to speak up in the assembly (319b5–e1), and that parents otherwise doting on their children do not succeed in making all of them virtuous (319e1–320b3).

This summary of the embarrassing reversal comes not in Socrates' own words but in a personification of 'the discussion' itself, which Socrates says convicts and ridicules them.[10] Socrates sketches this personification of a perceptive, articulate, and recapitulating critic elsewhere in Plato's dialogues (*Chrm.* 175d1–7, *Cr.* 50a7–54d1, *Phdr.* 260e2–261a6). He attributes unpleasant diagnoses of his interlocutors to imaginary and non-human characters in part to soften their emotional effect. But he also does so because his interlocutors know, as members of the human community, that justified and poignant charges from manifestly thoughtful points of view deserve their attention. Socrates thereby encourages them to imagine themselves in conversation with suitably authoritative judges of their views, rather than complacently relying on their own assumptions, in thrall to their argumentative momentum. To internalize the culture of excellent conversation is the mark of mature thinking.

Yet Socrates does not stop with the image of the haughty but quick-witted and incisive 'discussion' personified. If he had stopped there, he would have still effected some positive lesson for the audience. Protagoras and he would have come off looking much less pedagogically authoritative than they did at the beginning, and their followers and admirers would have had to learn to moderate their excitement for and blind trust in them. Yet Socrates goes on. He does so seemingly from a fear that, with no further comment from him, the apparently failed argument could cause misology, despair, or smugness in his listeners. So he agrees with the discussion's diagnosis of their conversational bind—'everything went upside down, and got terribly jumbled'—and pushes forward.[11] He says that he has a great desire to make everything clear, to go all the way through the issues again and sort out what virtue is, and then to try again to determine (*episkepsasthai*) whether it is teachable.[12]

It is the expression of his desire that occasions Socrates' more interesting image of himself. He introduces it with an opposed image, drawn also from Protagoras' opening lecture. The reason Socrates wants to reinvestigate the questions about virtue is

> lest that earlier Epimetheus have a chance to deceive and overturn us in our investigation, just as he neglected us in his distribution, as you put it. The Prometheus in your story pleased me more than Epimetheus: it is the former I make use of, and it is in exercising *promêtheia* over my

10 361a5–6: ἡ ἄρτι ἔξοδος τῶν λόγων ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος κατηγορεῖν τε καὶ καταγελᾶν.

11 361c4: πάντα ταῦτα … ἄνω κάτω ταραττόμενα δεινῶς.

12 361c5–8: καταφανῆ … διεξελθόντας … ἐξελθεῖν … ἐπισκέψασθαι.

> whole life that I trouble myself with all these matters; and if you wish, just as I was saying from the beginning, I should most like to investigate this thoroughly with you.[13]

Before we can understand the role Prometheus plays in Socrates' self-description, we should attend to his use of the god's brother, Epimetheus.

Protagoras' opening lecture recounted the origins of species. The unnamed gods formed all mortal beings from earth and other elements. They left to Prometheus and Epimetheus the specific outfitting of the species before their initiation into the light of day. Epimetheus persuaded his brother to let him allocate the abilities; Prometheus would check his work (*episkepsai*, 320e1). Epimetheus proceeded to work methodically, balancing the gifts he distributed, contriving various provisions against dangers, and taking caution against extinction (321a1–2). His efforts were satisfactory and his wards well cared for (321c6). Or most of his wards: all the animal species received gifts of self-protection except one, the humans. He had decided to save them for last, but ran out of protections just before he got there; or perhaps he simply forgot about them. In either case, he left them 'naked, shoeless, without a place to sleep, and unarmed' (321c7), soon to be exposed to the hazards of the world.

Socrates complains, at the end of the dialogue, that Epimetheus gave no care for the humans; he exhausted his care on the non-human animals. The meaning of this complaint is clear; but less clear is the meaning of his worry that Epimetheus might deceive himself and Protagoras and bring them down in their investigation. Socrates is trying to explain why he wants to get clearer about the nature of virtue and to return eventually to the question of virtue's teachability. He and Protagoras have come to a tentative agreement that virtues are the same, that all virtues are knowledge, and that knowledge is teachable; but this point of agreement fits poorly with Socrates' social observations that Athenian parents often fail to teach virtue to their sons and with Protagoras' pedagogical observation that the virtues do differ in important respects. Perhaps then Socrates fears lest they press on and settle into a premature agreement about the nature of virtue. This agreement would foreclose closer analysis—thereby 'bringing the investigation down'—and sticking them with a thesis that they would not accept were they to canvass a broader set of

13 361d: μὴ πολλάκις ἡμᾶς ὁ Ἐπιμηθεὺς ἐκεῖνος καὶ ἐν τῇ σκέψει σφήλῃ ἐξαπατήσας, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν τῇ διανομῇ ἠμέλησεν ἡμῶν, ὡς φῂς σύ. ἤρεσεν οὖν μοι καὶ ἐν τῷ μύθῳ ὁ Προμηθεὺς μᾶλλον τοῦ Ἐπιμηθέως· ᾧ χρώμενος ἐγὼ καὶ προμηθούμενος ὑπὲρ τοῦ βίου τοῦ ἐμαυτοῦ παντὸς πάντα ταῦτα πραγματεύομαι, καὶ εἰ σὺ ἐθέλοις, ὅπερ καὶ κατ' ἀρχὰς ἔλεγον, μετὰ σοῦ ἂν ἥδιστα ταῦτα συνδιασκοποίην.

considerations—thereby 'deceiving them'. This would explain Socrates' fear of deception and being brought down. But it still does not explain the relevance of the figure of Epimetheus. The idea must be that Epimetheus, despite not being completely wise (321b9), certainly looks clever. He makes calculations, discriminations, compromises, and determinations, and he does so repeatedly. From his concentrated action, it would seem that he would do a fine job. Just so, Socrates' conversation with Protagoras, taking more than forty-five pages to report, looks full of intelligent sallies, responses, developments, and decisions. But just as Epimetheus made a most crucial error, neglecting altogether the humans, Socrates and Protagoras made their most crucial error, neglecting altogether to define the central feature of the humans, their virtue. Epimetheus is the figure, even the ideal, of the eager, intellectually competent, caring, and hardworking person who, all the same, forgets what might matter most. He lacks the habit of standing back from his work and examining whether he gives priority to that which actually deserves the most priority, rather than whatever merely feels most urgent. Socrates is saying that the attendees at Callias' party risk the same attitude, taking pride in careful analysis without deploying the power of human rationality to assess what, in the final analysis, as we say, really matters.

Socrates goes on to say that Epimetheus does not please him as much as Prometheus does. This at first sounds strange. Protagoras did not originally set out to create appealing characters, but to tell an etiological tale. Epimetheus' imperfections played a narratively important role; it is obvious that Socrates, as well as anyone else, would not prefer the god whose name was glossed as 'Hindsight'. But we must remember that Protagoras' Prometheus had his own significant imperfections. He was at first perplexed by the humans' lack of outfitting (321c9), and he resorted to stealing (c10), and he could not procure for them political ability, leaving them vulnerable to civil strife (321d5, 322b1–c1). Thus it makes sense that Socrates would find it informative to rank his preferences. He prefers Prometheus' strengths, despite his weaknesses, to Epimetheus' strengths, given his weaknesses.

Rejecting the one brother for the other, Socrates says he 'makes use of' Prometheus.[14] This means that he makes use of the image of Prometheus. As a human Socrates cannot put the actual Prometheus to use; even if he could, the humans already have the skills Prometheus once procured for them. Thus despite the absence of any language for 'picture', 'icon', or 'paradigm', Socrates can only be said to make use of the image of Prometheus. This is

14 361d4: ᾧ χρώμενος.

not difficult to see. Harder to see is to what purpose he puts the image of Prometheus. Protagoras deploys the mythic tale of Prometheus' provisioning of humans to contrast the differential dispersion of practical skills with Zeus' equal dispersion of justice and shame (322c7–d1). Socrates, by contrast, does not use the image to explain something historical or, at any rate, sociological. Only the immediate context makes clear what Socrates means to say.

Besides the comparison with Epimetheus and the admission that Socrates wants to reinvestigate the nature of virtue, Socrates explains his remark that he puts (the image of) Prometheus to use in the following way: 'it is in exercising *promêtheia* (*promêthoumenos*) over my whole life that I trouble myself with all these matters' (361d5–6). The most obvious thing about this explanation is the pun on Prometheus and *promêthoumai* it deploys.[15] With this pun Socrates sounds like he is saying that his acting as Prometheus ('Prometheus-izing') over, or with respect to, his own life explains his taking trouble to investigate virtue. It sounds like he takes Prometheus as the ideal personage to emulate when getting out of a tough argumentative bind. What this means, however, depends on the aspect of Protagoras' Prometheus on which Socrates focuses.

We know seven facts about Protagoras' Prometheus. (i) The gods judge him and his brother suitable for the distribution of the animal features (320d5). (ii) Prometheus accedes to his brother's request to be allowed to do the distribution (320e1). (iii) Prometheus examines his brothers' distribution (320e1, 321c4). (iv) Prometheus wants to save the humans (321c9). (v) In his perplexity, Prometheus steals fire and technical prowess from Hephaestus and Athena (321d1). (vi) Prometheus cannot steal political wisdom, given Zeus' guarding of it (321d5–9). (vii) Prometheus eventually stands trial for the theft he performed for the humans' sake (322a3).

Socrates' image of Prometheus depends on the Protagorean picture (*en tôi muthôi*, 361d3), and so his ideal must reflect one or more of the features adumbrated earlier in the dialogue. If we are to understand this ideal, we must determine which makes sense of or clarifies Socrates' self-directed attitude, an attitude that prompts him to keep investigating virtue. The most obvious connection is the one made by the language of investigation (*episkopein*), (iii). Prometheus investigates the quality of his brother's distribution, seeks out its inadequacies, and resolves to repair it. Socrates investigates the quality of his and Protagoras' argument, seeks out its inadequacies, and again resolves to

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15 Other puns on Prometheus' name: Epicharmus fr. 12 K-A; [Aeschylus] *Prometheus Bound* 85–87 and perhaps 506; Aristophanes *Birds* 1511; Euripides *Ion* 448, 455; Plato Comicus fr. 145 K-A.

repair it. Prometheus must pursue this investigation because he has divided the labor with his brother (i–ii). Similarly, Socrates enunciates his desire to share the pursuit of human virtue with Protagoras (*sundiaskopoiên*, 361d7, cf. 347c1–348b1). Socrates' suspicion that the virtues cannot simply be procured and conveyed is suggested by Prometheus' inability to steal justice and shame from Zeus (322c3), (vi). In this view he differs from Protagoras' pedagogical optimism (318a6–319a7). Socrates' continuous efforts for the good of the humans does eventually result in his standing trial (vii). There is one final element of Protagoras' Prometheus, and it is the most famous one: Prometheus' philanthropy (iv). Socrates' concern for virtue looks to be a concern for humans, in this case Hippocrates and other potential students of Protagoras (cf. *Euthyp.* 3d7).

The use of Prometheus with respect to 'his whole life'—the use that leads him to want to keep investigating virtue with Protagoras and before the audience of students—seems in fact to be a richly polyvalent use, and the image of Prometheus seems to be a richly polyvalent image. By saying he uses Prometheus, Socrates posits that at all points in his life he aims to check out the situation as presented to him, and endeavors to improve it as necessary; he prefers working in tandem, having each partner oversee the other's contributions; he does not suppose he can teach virtue; he risks his life in his dogged commitment to communal self-education about the good; and he has a sensitivity to what makes life for humans worth living, namely talking about virtue (cf. *Apol.* 38a3–8). Perhaps Socrates does not at every moment reach the divine status of a Prometheus; the ideal simply keeps him focused on this broad but coherent range of goals.

As it turns out, the participle *promêthoumenos* could account for some of these aspects, even without the pun. Usually translated as 'having forethought', it means being conscientious, determining what has the most significance for some decision and reflecting on it, and dealing well with ignorance.[16] Socrates does describe the kind of due deliberation he prefers with this verb or the related noun or adjective on occasions elsewhere in the corpus.[17] And Protagoras had earlier in their conversation said that Socrates exercises *promêtheia* on his behalf, letting him choose to speak before a broad audience (316c6). But clearly the verb, as morally complex as it may be, does not capture the many dimensions—investigative, restorative, cooperative, humbling, philanthropic, and altruistic—of the image of Prometheus. The verb therefore does not provide as compelling an image of the person one could be, the person

16 See Moore (2015b).

17 *Rep.* 441e4; *Grg.* 501b4; *Lach.* 185a9, 188b4, 197b9, 198e3; *Cr.* 44e2, 45a4; *Laws* 730a.

that Socrates strives for, and the ideal that Hippocrates, Alcibiades, and even Callias and Protagoras could themselves seek to emulate. It also does not provide as vivid a picture of the person Socrates aims to be. We think we know who Socrates is, since we see him depicted across thousands of pages of Plato's dialogues, but this image treats us to the guidelines he himself strains to fill.

We have not yet broached one possibility suggested by Socrates' claim that the image of Prometheus pleases him more than the image of Epimetheus. This comparative judgment hints at a more complicated role of images in a person's life. Socrates may be admitting that, for all his weaknesses, Epimetheus still provides a certain positive image for him, that of the eager persuader, helper, and distributor. That Socrates is pleased less by that image than by the other may mean that he wishes it would have less motivating power over him than the other; but it may still have some power, desirable or not. After all, it is in part Socrates who got the conversation into the muddle he accuses Epimetheus of representing. Perhaps Socrates thinks that Epimetheus and Prometheus form a characteristic pair of images; perhaps he even thinks that Protagoras, clever man that he is, apparently prefers Epimetheus over Prometheus. It does seem true that self-improvement comes not just from positing and committing oneself to a productive self-image, but from arbitrating between multiple active and enticing images.

In the *Protagoras* Socrates encourages self-knowledge.[18] The language of exercising *promêtheia* over one's whole life echoes the self-reflection essential to self-knowledge. The language of using the image of Prometheus enriches the notion of self-knowledge, as a choosing of the kind of person one would like to be.

4 Typhon

Early in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates again uses an image of a god—this one more familiar—to help him understand himself, by presenting two possible selves to himself. Socrates has just explained that he has no time to explain the source of the popular Athenian myths, having been yet unable to obey the Delphic inscription to know himself. Rather than giving more plausible explanations for Boreas and centaurs and so forth, he looks into himself. At first he says nothing about the content of the 'himself' (*emauton*, 229e6, 230a3) he wants to know except that it differs from 'foreign things' (*ta allotria*), that it is something that

18 See Moore (2016).

could, with effort, be known, that it is something the Delphic inscription would take pains to urge knowing, and that it is something more personal than the content of the usual objects of myth-explanation. At the end of this exchange, however, he provides a little more information. He specifies that he wants to know

> whether I happen to be some sort of beast more complicated and inflamed than Typhon, or whether I am a gentler and simpler animal, sharing by nature in some divine and unconceited portion.[19]
>
> *Phdr.* 230a3–6

The image of the Typhon, the famous contestant to Zeus' ascendancy, does not provide Socrates with the image of what he might be, but a barrier between two other kinds of being he might be. Again Socrates is using an image, but unlike his use of the image of Prometheus, which he deploys as an ideal, his use of the image of Typhon provides, like Epimetheus, a counter-ideal.

Socrates used the image of Prometheus because it was handy, punned on *promêthoumai*, and evinced the very qualities he wanted to emphasize as ideal throughout his conversations in the *Protagoras*. As it turns out, Plato found the image of Prometheus fecund enough to use it in two other dialogues.[20] Socrates' reasons for using the image of Typhon in the *Phaedrus*, the only occurrence of the image in the dialogues, and specifically in this context of self-knowledge, are less apparent. It is often thought that Typhon indicates various facts about the human soul—the nature of its inner unity or disunity, the region if any that survives bodily death—but Socrates does not mention the soul here.[21] His use of the Typhon image is complicated also by the fact that Socrates uses other imagery later in his conversation with Phaedrus, in particular the charioteer, car, and horses when describing the soul and the lover in the Palinode, but also the counter-image of the shepherds beneath the cicada-songs.

Plato's deployment of Typhon in the *Phaedrus* might have two specific points of literary-historical reference. In the Aeschylean *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus, bolted to the mountainside, chafes at the advice of the visiting

19 εἴτε τι θηρίον ὂν τυγχάνω Τυφῶνος πολυπλοκώτερον καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπιτεθυμμένον, εἴτε ἡμερώτερόν τε καὶ ἁπλούστερον ζῷον, θείας τινὸς καὶ ἀτύφου μοίρας φύσει μετέχον.

20 On its use in *Phlb.* 16c5–17a5, see Thomas (2006); it also appears in *Pol.* 274c6–e2.

21 For only the most recent assessments of Typhon in the *Phaedrus* see Yunis (2011), 94; Werner (2012), 36–43; Ryan (2012), 102; Bradley (2012), 38, 48–54, 95–96; Rapp (2014), 32–35.

Oceanus. Oceanus has been telling him to know himself, reconcile himself to Zeus' ascendancy, and stop yelling so much and so angrily (*PB* 309–327). Prometheus hears this but asks Oceanus to leave. It will be for his own good (330–344, 374); he risks disaster by placing himself so near a combustible conflict. Take as an example, Prometheus says, Typhon. This hundred-headed, hostile, monstrous being tried earlier to contest with divine tyranny, boasting loftily. He did not succeed, and he too got pinned to, or set under, a mountain. Zeus' punishment did not, however, convince Typhon to stay silent; Mt. Etna would someday erupt with fiery and devastating effect (351–371). Prometheus' remarks in this play show that by the mid-fifth century, people could perceive a useful parallel between the stories of Prometheus and Typhon. Typhon raged against Zeus' power and he spoke with great self-regard and vituperation. This rage and conceit, both the author the *Prometheus Bound* and Hesiod suggest, was motivated by no more than a hunger for power. Even when Typhon was laid low, shown where the true cosmic force resides, he could not control himself; his anger kept seething, to the detriment of all around.[22] Prometheus, by contrast, claims foresight and some degree of self-control.

Typhon—or the same monster under the similar guise of Typho—is also mentioned in our earliest extant piece of Socratic literature, Aristophanes' *Clouds*. As Socrates introduces the Cloud chorus, Strepsiades provides a myth-rationalizing interpretation, calling them 'mist and dew', but Socrates resists, saying that they serve as the muses of many intellectuals (323–334). Strepsiades finds this plausible on the grounds of famous lyrics that vivify storm-clouds, including 'plaits of hundred-headed Typho' (*plokamous th' hekatogkephala Tuphô*, 336). This lyric quotation leaves ambiguous whether Strepsiades takes Typho as a natural storm force or as a divine agent. As it turns out, the Cloud chorus takes on the shape of the aspects most characteristic of their viewers; they provide a sort of reflection of one's self (343–355).[23] Typho(n) is not directly assimilated to this function of manifesting someone's self, but the proximity of discussion could readily lead an audience-member, or later reader, to draw the connection. There is considerable evidence that Plato knew the *Clouds*; the similarity between Aristophanes' (quoted) adjective for Typho, 'plaited' (*plokamous*), and Plato's for Typhon, 'many plaited, complicated' (*poluplokôteron*), is striking.

22 Hesiod notes that Typhon is responsible not just for volcanic eruptions but for dangerous storms (*Theog.* 859–880).

23 See Moore (2015c).

This literary background connects Typhon twice with self-knowledge, in the earlier instance with the possibility of change, and in the second instance with the question of agency. To be more complicated and more fiery implies being more intractable, less able to change, stuck in one's begrudging or power-hungry ways. It is a picture of a self, gnarled and reactive, that can never unravel or cool itself, that advances in time but not in maturity. It remains a sort of natural force, like a thunderhead, dynamic but not responsible, forceful but without any power of control.

The other side of Socrates' disjunction offers a self that is a calmer, less complex, partially divine, and unprepossessed animal. A calmer person is more responsive and readier to change in accordance with conditions or criticism. Less complex suggests fewer obstacles to these changes. Partially divine implies, in light of the Palinode, participation in rationality and readjustment to, or recollection of, a better and more justified way to live. Being unprepossessed, aware of one's failures and weakness, is for Socrates the most important ingredient for self-improvement.[24]

The image of Typhon represents a cut-off point in one's projection of the kind of person to be. Typhon's multiheadedness may represent the many 'heads' Socrates depicts for the soul in the Palinode. So too his persistent polyvocality and critical snarl, his desire for power and his disappointment with Zeus. But any more convoluted and irrepressibly noisy, and hope for improvement vanishes. Any less convoluted and noisy, however, and there is some hope for improvement. To imagine oneself as unlike Typhon is aspirational; to imagine oneself worse than Typhon is fatalistic. Prometheus tells Oceanus that he occupies a spot not so far from Typhon, but he implies that it is far enough that he could change for the better.

Sextus Empiricus misquotes the *Phaedrus* in a telling way. 'Socrates … said that he was ignorant about himself, what he was and how he related to the world: "for I do not know", he said, "whether I am a human or whether some other beast more complicated than Typhon"'.[25] Sextus treats anything less complicated than Typhon as a human, with all its attendant powers with respect to its surroundings. Here, then, Typhon is an image of an assertive and independent self beyond which one ought not to go. Seen from the other side, the side of excess, it is the image of what it means to lose one's humanity.[26]

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24 See Moore (2014).

25 *Against the Logicians*, 264: Σωκράτης μὲν ἠπόρησε μείνας ἐν τῇ σκέψει καὶ εἰπὼν αὑτὸν ἀγνοεῖν τί τ' ἔστι καὶ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὸ σύμπαν· 'ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ οἶδα,' φησίν, 'εἴτε ἄνθρωπός εἰμι εἴτε καὶ ἄλλο τι θηρίον Τυφῶνος πολυπλοκώτερον'.

26 Hunter (forthcoming) addresses the literary life of Typhon after Plato.

The two images discussed above, the image of Prometheus and the image of Typhon, allow Socrates to characterize himself in a way that motivates, and explains, his continued quest to become a better person. This characterization may have a self-improving function; should he forget himself, he may call these images to mind. It surely also has an other-improving function, recommending these images to others (Hippocrates and Protagoras, Phaedrus) for their own acceptance as an ideal.

5 *Charmides*

To show the importance of an image of oneself to self-knowledge, I now address the negative case, where the lack of an image causes difficulties in understanding self-knowledge. The *Charmides* provides the best negative case. It is the dialogue with the most direct talk about self-knowledge, and yet it concludes with the tentative (but to Socrates unsatisfying) result that it is probably impossible to know oneself, and were it possible, useless. My hypothesis is that these unsatisfying results come from Critias' and Socrates' decision not to use an image of the self in their arguments.

Not far into the dialogue, Socrates begins querying his interlocutors about the nature of 'discipline' (*sôphrosunê*). Charmides, having already failed a few times, tries to support the definition of 'doing one's own things'. But he fails again, giving no coherent picture of the scope of one's own things or, in our terms, the nature of this self as owner. When Critias takes over, he tries the definition 'doing good things', but under increasing pressure abandons this for a definition he seems immensely confident in and proud of: 'knowing yourself'. He gives a strange account of this definition by appeal to conventions of greeting. He says that the 'Know yourself' is a greeting to those entering the Delphic sanctuary; in this case, 'yourself' is one who seeks the wisdom of Apollo. But Critias says that the Temple addresses this to entrants to the sanctuary not as advice but merely as a greeting; and furthermore, the Temple uses not these actual words but 'Be disciplined' (*sôphronei*). Finally, Critias says nothing about the sort of 'knowing' he has in mind. To top it off, even were 'self as religious pilgrim' a productive image and the one evoked by Critias' gloss on the inscription, neither Critias nor Socrates pursues it.

Their conversation takes a rather different direction. 'Oneself' is swapped out for 'something' (*ti* or *tinos*, 165c5–6), and then for 'itself' (*heautês*, 166c3), that is, the knowing itself, and then with complex universal instances of knowing, for example all instances or types of knowledge themselves and the knowing itself, or knowing and ignorance. Socrates and Critias justify these transfor-

mations on the basis of the apparent identity between, for example, knowing knowledge and (therefore also) knowing ignorance. There are some respects in which the course of argument could be cogently reconstructed, especially by use of an epistemic view of the mind. But as a conversation itself, there are some major problems.

The first problem arises when Socrates presents some analogies that suggest that knowing oneself is impossible. Sight does not see itself; fear does not fear itself; the double does not double itself; and so on. Because there is no image of the perhaps multi-part self that knows some aspects of itself—no sense for the sort of thing it is, in comparison to the perceptions, attitudes, and comparatives—Critias cannot avoid assimilating self-knowing to these analogies. Socrates repeatedly prompts him to think whether self-knowing should not be so assimilated, but without a picture, Critias has no lever for doubt.[27]

The second problem arises when Socrates presents some analogies that suggest that knowing oneself is useless. On the austere plain of argument theretofore presented, it looks like usefulness comes from knowing various discrete fields, like medicine or carpentry. But the self or the matrix of knowledge one knows is separate from all those discrete fields. So knowing oneself cannot be useful. Neither Socrates nor Critias ever brings up an image of a person or another being who lauds and explains the value of their self-knowledge as over and above the value of their particular pieces of knowledge. Without an image of the self that makes sense of the Delphic imperative, Critias again has no way to respond.

Many readers—but Socrates especially—acknowledge their skepticism at Socrates' negative conclusions, that self-knowledge is impossible or useless. This is presumably because Socrates elsewhere, and even in the *Charmides* itself, treats knowing yourself as possible (*Chrm.* 158e6–159a10, 160d6–e1), a pinnacle of wisdom (*Prot.* 343b1–4), and most worth pursuing (*Phdr.* 229e3–230a3). What explains Critias' failure to extricate himself from Socrates' negative arguments appears to be Socrates' decision not to give him an image of the feasibility and benefit of knowing oneself. Critias may lack the imagination to come up with images for himself.

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27 A productive image for self-knowing that Critias ignores but that the dialogue's beginning seems to hint at (154b1–8) is of a child growing up; see Schapiro (1999) and Lovibond (2002) for some development of the image for contemporary reflection on self-constitution.

6 *Alcibiades*

In another dialogue, however, Plato has Socrates provide an image of self-knowledge: an eye seeing itself. As we noted above about the *Alcibiades*, Alcibiades is uncertain whether self-knowledge is easy or difficult to attain. As I suggested, when he thinks that knowing himself is easy, he must think that his 'self' is his unique strengths and ambitions. Of course he has not articulated this implicit image of the self, and so he has not justified his reliance on this implicit picture. But such an image of the self makes him respond complaisantly to the 'know yourself' directive. Given the intensity of his self-confidence, he thinks he has already satisfied it. Unfortunately, he is premature in so concluding. This image of the self—as one's dominant desire and dominant strength—has the added disadvantage of limiting the way one might think to improve oneself. It treats the self as something given, possibly perfect, and worth acting from without revision.

Socrates goes on, late in the dialogue, to provide a contrasting and somewhat more explicit image for the self in the context of the Delphic precept.

> I will tell you what I for one think that inscription means and advises. I hazard to suppose that there are not many models (*paradeigma*) of it, except for sight alone … If it advised one of our eyes, just as if it were advising a human, and said 'See yourself', how would we understand what it recommends?[28]
>
> 132d1–7

Socrates goes on to say that an eye sees, in a reflective surface, itself (132d8), or, more properly, the face in which it is lodged (132e1, 133a1). In this model, paradigm, or image, the self is imagined as an eye, or just as probably, a face with an eye (or a pair of eyes). It gathers information, and can gather information about itself, but only indirectly, through another like itself. In particular, it learns about itself through its representation in its likeness if that likeness falls in some way within its focus. Just as an eye sees itself in the reflection of another eye, a self will learn about itself in its reflection—some sort of manifestation of its formal structure—in another self. This image of the self brings out several salutary features: that self-knowledge requires another

28 ἐγώ σοι φράσω, ὅ γε ὑποπτεύω λέγειν καὶ συμβουλεύειν ἡμῖν τοῦτο τὸ γράμμα. κινδυνεύει γὰρ οὐδὲ πολλαχοῦ εἶναι παράδειγμα αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν μόνον … εἰ ἡμῶν τῷ ὄμματι ὥσπερ ἀνθρώπῳ συμβουλεῦον εἶπεν 'ἰδὲ σαυτόν,' πῶς ἂν ὑπελάβομεν τί παραινεῖν;

person; that self-knowledge benefits from people who are very 'reflective', able to re-present someone else's character; and that self-knowledge may take some effort or an apt and lucky situation to attain.

Neither of these two images—Alcibiades' implicit one, or Socrates' explicit one—suggest a complete picture of the self. Socrates', indeed, leaves a great deal undefined. We presume that the soul learns about itself in another soul when those souls converse, and perhaps converse about or with justice and virtue. But the image does not specify this, and it does not explain the way one changes oneself, or what it is to know rather than simply believe something about oneself. It does not immediately explain the way selfhood so imaged is the seat of *sôphrosunê*, knowledge of one's possessions, and the ability to teach one's citizens to become virtuous, all of which is later associated with coming to know oneself. All the same, Socrates' image provides something important: the idea that selfhood is realized in social exchange, not in idiosyncratic self-reliance, and that it is about, at the most fundamental level, excellence, wisdom, knowing, and thinking (133b9–c2). It is an image that vaunts human potential.

7 Conclusion

Each of the images of the self so far recalled is radically incomplete. The ideas of self as Prometheus, in the *Protagoras*, as a creature gentler than Typhon, in the *Phaedrus*, and as an eye looking at itself in reflective material, in *Alcibiades*, prove aspirational in only small and discrete ways. The inadequacy of these images suggests looking for a more robust, comprehensive, even complete image.

Wittgenstein wrote that 'The human body is the best picture of the human soul' (*PI* II §iv). He thought that in order to know about self-knowledge, we should know about the constellation of actions that answer to the sorts of things people want to know about themselves. How do people confront tough choices? How do they stay focused on long-term priorities in the face of short-term impulses? How do they assure to others their sincerity? How do they diagnose their own weaknesses? The unified 'problem' of self-knowledge is a confusion, Wittgenstein thinks, because it conflates several modes of knowing and several forms of the self. But we *can* ask about self-knowledge when we ask about a person over the course of a long-term range of human experiences. It is in this way that a person—a body and its actions—provides the best image of the self.

From this perspective, we might wonder whether Socrates provides that image of the self-knower. He is surely the most well-developed image in Plato.

We see him in actual human life. The image approaches that of reality, with such detail and diversity of action. It is the *living* that Socrates wants to see in the *Timaeus* (19b2–c1). Yet Socrates might not be such a good image. There is the perennial debate about the way Socrates investigates himself as he investigates others, if he even does do this. The debate might be insoluble, however, because Plato depicts Socrates in *only some situations*. We do not see Socrates doing *everything* he might do. Socrates must often act privately, outside the gaze of Plato and therefore the reader. He is mysterious. It is the mystery of Socrates that prompts Plato, like his Alcibiades in the *Symposium*, to depict even Socrates in terms of images.[29] These images are helpful; they simplify, focus, and allow us to model or counter-model ourselves, one element of life at a time.

It is a familiar refrain that images are inherently inadequate. Despite that, Plato presents the use of images as both inevitable and useful. The ideas of inventorying our desires, or perceiving our beliefs, or realizing that our soul is mortal, or immortal, or partially mortal and partially immortal—I suspect that all these ideas liken our self to something else: a warehouse, or a marionette, or an enduring object, or a mixture of parts. We might think that all these images have a problem. But this problem is not that they are partial; any image will be partial. Their problem is a moral one. They may not succeed in providing us an image—a necessary image—of the self we deserve to imagine, of the self we ought to imagine.

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29 Both Belfiore and Ford in this collection identify the ways Plato presents images or counter-images of Socrates. Alciabides praises (ἐπαινεῖν) Socrates by means of images (δι' εἰκόνων), *Symp*. 215a6–222b10.

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Perspectivism in Plato's Views of the Gods

Gerd Van Riel

The images of the gods present a particular problem for Plato. He is especially critical of the images of the gods that the poets present in the traditional myths, but, on the other hand, some sort of representation is necessary. We must have some sort of image of the divine to which we can try to assimilate ourselves philosophically, and yet our limited human perspective entails that we cannot fully and accurately perceive or represent the divine. The rejection of perspectivism is a major point in Plato's aesthetics, ethics, and epistemology, and, as this paper argues, it also underlies Plato's theology. The fundamental premise of Plato's conception of piety, and hence of religion, is that god ought to be taken as the measure. We shall have to discuss the exact meaning of this premise.

In a well-known passage in the *Sophist* (235c–237a), Plato distinguishes two kinds of mimetic art (*mimêtikê technê*): the one is called 'the art of likeness-making' (*eikastikê technê*), whereas the other is 'the art of appearance-making' (*phantastikê technê*). The first consists in the accurate reproduction of the proportions of the original model:

> Visitor: One type of imitation I see is the art of likeness-making. That's the one we have whenever someone produces an imitation by keeping to the proportions of length, breadth, and depth of his model, and also by keeping to the appropriate colours of its parts.[1]
>
> PLATO, *Soph.* 235d–e, tr. N.P. WHITE

The second, on the other hand, does not respect the original proportions. It is used first and foremost in the production of monumental works of art. In this case, the artists have to shorten certain aspects of the model, and make longer other aspects, taking into account the viewpoint of the spectator, so that the statue or the image appears an accurate copy, without, however, reproducing the real proportions of the original:

1 *Soph.* 235d–e: Μίαν μὲν τὴν εἰκαστικὴν ὁρῶν ἐν αὐτῇ τέχνην. ἔστι δ' αὕτη μάλιστα ὁπόταν κατὰ τὰς τοῦ παραδείγματος συμμετρίας τις ἐν μήκει καὶ πλάτει καὶ βάθει, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι χρώματα ἀποδιδοὺς τὰ προσήκοντα ἑκάστοις, τὴν τοῦ μιμήματος γένεσιν ἀπεργάζηται.

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> Theaetetus: But don't all imitators try to do that?
>
> Visitor: Not the ones who sculpt or draw very large works. If they reproduced the true proportions of their beautiful subjects, you see, the upper parts would appear smaller than they should, and the lower parts would appear larger, because we see the upper parts from farther away and the lower parts from closer.
>
> Theaetetus: Of course.
>
> Visitor: So don't those craftsmen *say goodbye to truth*, and produce in their images the proportions that seem to be beautiful instead of the real ones?
>
> Theaetetus: Absolutely.[2]
>
> *Soph.* 235e–236a, tr. N.P. WHITE

This text shows that for Plato in the *Sophist*, the true beauty of an image can only lie in an accurate reproduction of the proportions (not of course of the dimensions) of the original. Elements in the sculpture that only serve to remedy optical effects—due to the position of the work of art and/or of the spectators, can only be beautiful in appearance.

This emphasis on the deceptive nature of appearance-making art, along with the predilection for what is called 'likeness-making', reveals that Plato wants to assume an absolute viewpoint, from which we can undo any optic illusion, and detect the true shape of the work, making abstraction of any perspective or situation-bound features. It should be a viewpoint without any perspective, necessary to contemplate true reality. Such a viewpoint, in line with the *Phaedo* (82d–e), would have to be a view that escapes from the narrow outlook through the bars of the prison that is our body, or, in line with the *Republic* (VI, 493a–c), a viewpoint that pulls us away from the rhetorical tricks used by artists to please the audience. Such a view of the gods would be a view from the divine perspective, rather than a flawed and limited human one. But it may be clear from the start that this leaves us again, as flawed and limited humans, with the problem of perspectivism: when do we know which perspective is the right one? When do we know the divine measure—or are we doomed to be always walking in the dark, with no warrant of truthfulness at all

2 *Soph.* 235e–236a: Τί δ'; οὐ πάντες οἱ μιμούμενοί τι τοῦτ' ἐπιχειροῦσι δρᾶν;—Οὔκουν ὅσοι γε τῶν μεγάλων πού τι πλάττουσιν ἔργων ἢ γράφουσιν. εἰ γὰρ ἀποδιδοῖεν τὴν τῶν καλῶν ἀληθινὴν συμμετρίαν, οἶσθ' ὅτι σμικρότερα μὲν τοῦ δέοντος τὰ ἄνω, μείζω δὲ τὰ κάτω φαίνοιτ' ἂν διὰ τὸ τὰ μὲν πόρρωθεν, τὰ δ' ἐγγύθεν ὑφ' ἡμῶν ὁρᾶσθαι.—Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.—Ἆρ' οὖν οὐ χαίρειν τὸ ἀληθὲς ἐάσαντες οἱ δημιουργοὶ νῦν οὐ τὰς οὔσας συμμετρίας ἀλλὰ τὰς δοξούσας εἶναι καλὰς τοῖς εἰδώλοις ἐναπεργάζονται;—Παντάπασί γε.

in our speaking about the gods? In other words: what is the power of images—of our human conceptions, that is—in divine matters?

1 A Divine Perspective

In the normative view we know from standard Platonism, art is depreciated as falling short of truth in itself, i.e., artistic production is seen as deceptive, over against a more austere view on 'true' artistic quality as representing true beauty. This categorisation is closely bound to the ontological distinction between the forms and the sensible things, and between knowledge and opinion. It is likewise often argued that Plato had a thoroughly metaphysical conception of the divine, with *nous* being the highest god—who is then identified with the demiurge in the *Timaeus*. On the basis of this claim, the traditional and celestial gods represented in the traditional myths are then seen as lower divinities who are not really of concern to Plato, and to whom he only refers in an ironic way.

In my recent book on *Plato's Gods*,[3] I adduce evidence to deny this claim, arguing that Plato's gods are not superseded by a separate intellect. At this point, suffice it to say that, if Plato's true and highest god is Intellect, this should *in principle* be accessible to our human mind. At the very least, calling it 'Intellect' would mean that it is not different in kind from the intellectual capacities we possess, and that the difference could only be one of gradation. This is the account we find in Aristotle: God as self-thinking thought is, of course, the highest performance of the highest possible activity, but it is an activity that is also ours, and to which we *can* climb up. We can do so only momentarily, due to the fact that we are held back by the burdens of our every-day life, but we are divinized in so far as we perform that activity of contemplation (*Nicomachean Ethics* X, 1177a12–1179a32).

Plato, of course, also promotes assimilation to the divine. Yet in his case, it is important to note, first, that this phrase is always without exception followed by a qualification, expressing doubt as to its ultimate feasibility: in so far as is possible (*kata to dunaton*),[4] which is not always given its full weight by

3 Van Riel (2013), 54–121.

4 *Laws* IV, 716c (εἰς δύναμιν ὅτι μάλιστα καὶ αὐτὸν τοιοῦτον ἀναγκαῖον γίγνεσθαι), *Tht.* 176b ('so far as is possible', κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν), *Phdr.* 253a–b ('in so far as a human being is capable of partaking in the divine', καθ' ὅσον δυνατὸν θεοῦ ἀνθρώπῳ μετασχεῖν) and b ('according to each one's capability', ὅσῃ ἑκάστῳ δύναμις), *Symp.* 207d ('the mortal nature seeks to become eternal and immortal in so far as possible', ἡ θνητὴ φύσις ζητεῖ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀεί τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος) and *Rep.* X, 619a ('so far as is possible', κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν).

commentators. Secondly, the assimilation to god, in Plato's case, does not mean an assimilation to intellect, or 'thinking god's thoughts', as Michael Bordt has argued in his book on Plato's theology.[5] What Plato means by this phrase is that we should act in accordance with the statement that god is the measure of all things, and hence, that our being as like god as possible comes down to enacting the virtue of moderation (*sôphrosunê*). This becomes clear in the fourth book of the *Laws*, which is a crucial passage for understanding Plato's theology. In his address to the newcomers in the newly established state, the lawgiver explains how they should recommend themselves to the god, and he lays down the following grounding principle:

> So what conduct recommends itself to god and reflects his wishes? There is only one sort, epitomised in the old saying 'like approves of like' (excess apart, which is both its own enemy and that of due proportion). In our view it is god who is pre-eminently the 'measure of all things', much more so than any 'man', as they say. So if you want to recommend yourself to someone of this character, you must do your level best to make your own character reflect his, and on this principle the moderate man is god's friend, being like him, whereas the immoderate and unjust man is not like him and is his enemy; and the same reasoning applies to the other vices too.[6]
>
> *Laws* IV, 716c–d, tr. T.J. SAUNDERS

The divine law expressed here requires that one must be moderate (*sôphrôn*) in order to be loved by god and to achieve moral goodness. That is to say: the basic virtue that guides a religious person is moderation, inspired by the recognition that god is the measure of all things, and that we, as human beings, need to adjust ourselves to that measure. Of course, this virtue, like any virtue, goes together with *phronêsis*, but rather than inciting us to think god's thoughts, it locates wisdom in the recognition of an external measure that is set to our human endeavours.[7]

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5 Bordt (2006) 184, n. 70 argues that 'being like god' is identical to 'thinking god's thoughts'.

6 *Laws* IV, 716c–d: Τίς οὖν δὴ πρᾶξις φίλη καὶ ἀκόλουθος θεῷ; μία, καὶ ἕνα λόγον ἔχουσα ἀρχαῖον, ὅτι τῷ μὲν ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον ὄντι μετρίῳ φίλον ἂν εἴη, τὰ δ' ἄμετρα οὔτε ἀλλήλοις οὔτε τοῖς ἐμμέτροις. ὁ δὴ θεὸς ἡμῖν πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἂν εἴη μάλιστα, καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἤ πού τις, ὥς φασιν, ἄνθρωπος· τὸν οὖν τῷ τοιούτῳ προσφιλῆ γενησόμενον, εἰς δύναμιν ὅτι μάλιστα καὶ αὐτὸν τοιοῦτον ἀναγκαῖον γίγνεσθαι, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτον δὴ τὸν λόγον ὁ μὲν σώφρων ἡμῶν θεῷ φίλος, ὅμοιος γάρ, ὁ δὲ μὴ σώφρων ἀνόμοιός τε καὶ διάφορος καὶ ⟨ὁ⟩ ἄδικος, καὶ τὰ ἄλλ' οὕτως κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ἔχει.

7 See Van Riel (2013), 12–24.

One can easily see what is at stake here: if god is defined as 'intellect', then there is no reason to believe that god—or god's thoughts—would be ultimately inaccessible to the human mind. God's nature and god's thought would—again, in principle—be transparent, and would leave little space to doubt.

Yet that is not what we find in Plato. Plato is always very cautious when he is talking about the gods. Surely, there are things that can be said with certainty. In the tenth book of the *Laws*, it is certain that the gods must exist, that they do care about human beings, and that they cannot be bribed by sacrifices or offerings (*Laws* x, 885b). In the second book of the *Republic*, Plato notoriously lays down two basic rules or patterns (*tupoi*) for *theologia*, speaking about the gods: that they must be good, and that they can only appear to us as they really are. Interestingly for our purposes, Plato introduces this by rejecting blasphemous myths, even if they are conceived in an allegorical way:

> We won't admit stories into our city—whether allegorical or not—about Hera being chained by her son, nor about Hephaestus being hurled from heaven by his father when he tried to help his mother, who was being beaten, nor about the battle of the gods in Homer. The young can't distinguish what is allegorical from what isn't, and the opinions they absorb at that age are hard to erase and apt to become unalterable. For these reasons, then, we should probably take the utmost care to insure that the first stories they hear about virtue are the best ones for them to hear.[8]
>
> *Rep.* II, 378d–e, tr. G.M.A. GRUBE, rev. C.D.C. REEVE

Plato thus accepts that certain myths and stories may be taken or intended to be an allegory (*hyponoia*), thereby referring to the special status an image might have—comparable to what he said in the *Sophist*: it would be conceivable that the imagery was intended by the poet, as part of his skill to convey truth from a specific perspective, like the deformed statue of Athena which, seen from a specific angle, would reveal its beauty. Myth could likewise be designed, not as a literal rendering of the nature of the gods, but with a hidden message, which would be truthful after all. But Plato rejects this possibility, with the argument that those who would not recognize the allegory as such might easily

8 *Rep.* II, 378d–e: Ἥρας δὲ δεσμοὺς ὑπὸ ὑέος καὶ Ἡφαίστου ῥίψεις ὑπὸ πατρός, μέλλοντος τῇ μητρὶ τυπτομένῃ ἀμυνεῖν, καὶ θεομαχίας ὅσας Ὅμηρος πεποίηκεν οὐ παραδεκτέον εἰς τὴν πόλιν, οὔτ' ἐν ὑπονοίαις πεποιημένας οὔτε ἄνευ ὑπονοιῶν. ὁ γὰρ νέος οὐχ οἷός τε κρίνειν ὅτι τε ὑπόνοια καὶ ὃ μή, ἀλλ' ἃ ἂν τηλικοῦτος ὢν λάβῃ ἐν ταῖς δόξαις δυσέκνιπτά τε καὶ ἀμετάστατα φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι· ὧν δὴ ἴσως ἕνεκα περὶ παντὸς ποιητέον ἃ πρῶτα ἀκούουσιν ὅτι κάλλιστα μεμυθολογημένα πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἀκούειν.

be misled. The argument is similar to what we read in the *Sophist*: despite the better artistic skills required for the art of appearance-making, this art would still fall short of conveying truth. To illustrate this point, one can refer to an anecdote told by the twelfth-century Byzantine author Joannes Tzetzes, an anecdote that is often referred to in the commentaries on the passage from the *Sophist* that we have been quoting.[9] It tells a story of two sculptors, Alcamenes and the famous Phidias, each of them having made a statue of Athena. Alcamenes had no idea at all of perspective or optical illusions, nor of geometry. He just made a statue that was really beautiful to look at. Phidias, on the other hand, had calculated the height of the statue's placement, and he had altered the shape and traits of Athena accordingly. The crowd who came to have a look nearly lynched him because of the ugliness he had imposed on the goddess. But once the two statues were pulled up and set at the right place, the fine traits of Alcamenes' statue disappeared, whereas the deformities of Phidias' Athena changed into a beautiful shape. This story does not only confirm Phidias' technical superiority, but it also states that eventually, Phidias' work, with all its unreal and illusory proportions, was the more beautiful one. Beauty is not destroyed, but rather reinforced by technical interventions that take into account the concrete circumstances of the work's placement. By this argument, then, beauty can and will only be realized by taking the perspectivist view, and renouncing to the absolute standpoint, and by sophisticating the artists' skills through knowledge of optics and geometry. The same could be said about myth: if the author is a good poet, he can reveal a true insight through his myth, even though this means that he has to tell lies. Isn't that the whole story about literature, under the auspices of the famous phrase of Hesiod's muses: 'we know how to say many lies like the truth, and, whenever we wish, we know how to tell the truth' (Hesiod, *Theogony* 27–29).

Yet Plato does not trust the poets, nor does he trust their audience. In the second book of the *Republic*, he criticizes the traditional poets, with Homer as their leader, who have misrepresented the gods as committing all kinds of misdemeanour and immoral behaviour. He stipulates that he is not going to compose the poems in the poets' place, but that the poets should observe the abovementioned rules about the god's goodness and truthfulness, as patterns for their poetry (*Rep.* II, 378e–379a, quoted below).

9 Joannes Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8, 193.

2 A Human, All Too Human Perspective on the Divine

However affirmative Plato may be about the existence and goodness of the gods, he is far less certain about many other aspects of the divine. He is always very eager to point out, when discussing the gods, that we as humans cannot know them, and that the final judgement about things divine should be left over to the gods themselves.

Rather than an ironic play against traditional images of the gods, this hesitation is an essential element in Plato's speaking about the gods. In fact, there is enough textual evidence to prove that, on the whole, Plato's theological views are always presented as more or less tentative.[10] In the *Cratylus*, when Socrates and Hermogenes decide to discuss the etymology of the names of the gods, Socrates expresses his caution in the following way:

> The first and finest line of investigation, which as intelligent people we must acknowledge, is this, that we admit that we know nothing about the gods themselves or about the names they call themselves—although it is clear that they call themselves by true ones. The second best line on the correctness of names is to say, as is customary in our prayers, that we hope the gods are pleased by the names we give them, since we know no others. I think it is an excellent custom.[11]
>
> *Crat.* 400d–401a, tr. C.D.C. REEVE

We do not have many literal examples of the custom referred to here, but it is clear enough that in the context of cult, choosing the correct epithet would have made an important difference—and a final invocation of the god's lenience in case the names chosen would not do, would be perfectly expressed

10 Thus, e.g., Brisson (1974), 105 and 478, who indicates (at *Tim.* 40 d–e) that Plato is mocking the traditional poets who think they can provide a direct account of the divine. Cornford (1937), 138–139 also argues that this hesitation only concerns the anthropomorphic presentation of the traditional gods, not, however, the celestial gods, which we can see. This may well be the case, but it would then only be a statement about the representations of the gods, not about the nature of the divine—thus leaving open the question of how the traditional gods ought to be conceived of: cf. Karfík (2004), 141.

11 *Crat.* 400d–401a: Ναὶ μὰ Δία ἡμεῖς γε, ὦ Ἑρμόγενες, εἴπερ γε νοῦν ἔχοιμεν, ἕνα μὲν τὸν κάλλιστον τρόπον, ὅτι περὶ θεῶν οὐδὲν ἴσμεν, οὔτε περὶ αὐτῶν οὔτε περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἅττα ποτὲ ἑαυτοὺς καλοῦσιν· δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐκεῖνοί γε τἀληθῆ καλοῦσι. δεύτερος δ' αὖ τρόπος ὀρθότητος, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς νόμος ἐστὶν ἡμῖν εὔχεσθαι, οἵτινές τε καὶ ὁπόθεν χαίρουσιν ὀνομαζόμενοι, ταῦτα καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς καλεῖν, ὡς ἄλλο μηδὲν εἰδότας· καλῶς γὰρ δὴ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ νενομίσθαι.

by the formula as we have it here, leaving it up to the gods to decide the name by which they want to be called.[12]

Plato expresses his hesitation about using the appropriate divine names more than once. In the *Philebus*, Socrates even confesses to a 'more than human dread over what names to use for the gods—it surpasses the greatest fear' (*Phlb.* 12c, tr. D. Frede).[13] Plato thus makes it clear, on more than one occasion, that we humans are not the final authority to decide how to address the gods. In the *Cratylus*, the hesitation about naming the gods is explained by pointing out that our names do not primarily concern the gods, but rather express our attitude towards them. An investigation into divine names is then, rather, to be seen as an investigation into our human understanding:

> So, if it's all right with you, let's begin our investigation by first announcing to the gods that we will not be investigating *them*—since we do not regard ourselves as worthy to conduct such an investigation—but rather human beings, and the beliefs they had in giving the gods their names. After all, there's no offense in doing that.[14]
>
> *Crat.* 401a, tr. C.D.C. REEVE

12 Cf. Burkert (1985), 73 with n. 17; except for one (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 160), Burkert's examples are all taken from Plato, only two of which are using the formula with reference to the divine names: *Crat.* 400 e and *Phlb.* 12c; *Phdr.* 273 c adapts the formula to address the rhetorician Tisias, while *Tim.* 28b applies it to finding a good name for the universe. This allusive usage may be seen, however, as a confirmation of the fact that this formula was well recognized by Plato's readers as part of the practice of praying. Pulleyn (1997), ch. 6, may well be right in saying that these cautionary formulae about the gods' names were not an expression of anxiety, but that they were meant to praise the gods in order to please them. He argues, moreover, that the fact that most examples are from Plato, reflects a philosophical tradition of speculation on names, rather than representing daily practices in rituals and prayers. See, however, Rowett (2013), who examines evidence from the Pre-Socratics to challenge this claim.

13 Other examples of this hesitation are *Phaedrus* 246b–d, where a possible definition of 'god' is concluded with the phrase, 'but of course we must let this be as it may please the gods, and speak accordingly'. Or again, Platonic texts on the lawgiver's refraining from interfering with religion (*Rep.* IV, 427b–e and *Laws* III, 679b–c) may be taken as examples of a particular caution 'not to shake the unshakeable', i.e., not to interfere in matters that aren't of our (human) business. Cf. also *Crit.* 107a–b.

14 *Crat.* 401a: εἰ οὖν βούλει, σκοπῶμεν ὥσπερ προειπόντες τοῖς θεοῖς ὅτι περὶ αὐτῶν οὐδὲν ἡμεῖς σκεψόμεθα—οὐ γὰρ ἀξιοῦμεν οἷοί τ' ἂν εἶναι σκοπεῖν—ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἥν ποτέ τινα δόξαν ἔχοντες ἐτίθεντο αὐτοῖς τὰ ὀνόματα· τοῦτο γὰρ ἀνεμέσητον.

The reverence or indeed fear does not only concern divine names or religious language. It also applies to cosmological aspects of Plato's theology. This is notoriously the case in the *Timaeus*, where the entire cosmogonic story is referred to as a likely myth. Interestingly, this cautious attitude is said to be the effect of two factors: (1) that the object matter of the story is a likeness itself, i.e. the sensible world that imitates the intelligible realm (*Tim* 29b–d)—after all, the *Timaeus* is a story about demiurgy, and it is telling that exactly this terminology (*dêmiourgos*) is also used for the artistic production of images;[15] and (2) that our human knowledge is insufficient:

> Don't be surprised then, Socrates, if it turns out repeatedly that we won't be able to produce accounts on a great many subjects—on gods or the coming to be of the universe—that are completely and perfectly consistent and accurate. Instead, if we can come up with accounts no less likely than any, we ought to be content, keeping in mind that both I, the speaker, and you, the judges, are only human. So we should accept the likely tale on these matters. It behooves us not to look for anything beyond this.[16]
>
> *Tim.* 29c–d, tr. D.J. ZEYL

We are 'only human', and our human condition entails the shortcomings with which we have to deal when discussing the principles that constitute the world. Hence, our account can only be a likely tale. We can only make progress by coming up with stories that are more likely than others. Structurally, however, we cannot produce entirely accurate accounts. This means that the cosmology expounded in the *Timaeus* may perhaps be more accurate than others, but that, after all, it remains a 'human, all too human' account.

As a consequence, we are not fully entitled to let go of all the traditional accounts of the gods, not even in the context of the *Timaeus*, as we do not have any clear ground to reject them. We may dislike them, but we cannot disprove them. As Timaeus suggests, we had better respect them, on the authority of those who produced them: our ancestors who claimed to be the

15 See, e.g., the reference to the craftsman who produces an imitation in *Soph.* 235e–236a, quoted above.

16 *Tim.* 29c–d: ἐὰν οὖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, πολλὰ πολλῶν πέρι, θεῶν καὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως, μὴ δυνατοὶ γιγνώμεθα πάντῃ πάντως αὐτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς ὁμολογουμένους λόγους καὶ ἀπηκριβωμένους ἀποδοῦναι, μὴ θαυμάσῃς· ἀλλ' ἐὰν ἄρα μηδενὸς ἧττον παρεχώμεθα εἰκότας, ἀγαπᾶν χρή, μεμνημένους ὡς ὁ λέγων ἐγὼ ὑμεῖς τε οἱ κριταὶ φύσιν ἀνθρωπίνην ἔχομεν, ὥστε περὶ τούτων τὸν εἰκότα μῦθον ἀποδεχομένους πρέπει τούτου μηδὲν ἔτι πέρα ζητεῖν.

offspring of gods. This is what Timaeus contends when he introduces the 'old gods' (Tethys, Okeanos, Ouranos, Gaia, …):

> As for the other wondrous beings (*daimones*), it is beyond our task to know and speak of how they came to be. We should accept on faith the assertions of those figures of the past who claimed to be the offspring of gods. They must surely have been well informed about their own ancestors. So we cannot avoid believing the children of gods, even though their accounts lack plausible and compelling proofs. Rather, we should follow custom and believe them, on the ground that what they claim to be reporting are matters of their own concern. Accordingly, let us accept their account of how these gods came to be and state what it is.[17]
>
> *Tim.* 40d–e, tr. D.J. ZEYL

Obviously, if even a scientific cosmology lacks demonstrative force, then this is a fortiori true of traditional theology. The scientific account will by its very nature be more convincing. But that is not the point here. The point is that neither of the two can apodictically dismiss the other, as they both pertain to a world of likely myths. On account of our structural lack of knowledge of things divine, we ought to 'believe' the stories told in traditional myth.

When brought together, the texts bear enough evidence to state that Plato's hesitation is not just a rhetorical figure, nor an ironic inference against the poets. He is really referring to a structural lack of human knowledge, which entails the incapacity to give a truly correct account of the gods. Such an account would presuppose that we take the gods' perspective, and that is exactly what we are incapable of. We cannot reach the viewpoint from which we could see the gods as they are in themselves. As a consequence, we are left with images, names and stories that express our own view, and which will never be more than 'likely'.

Moreover, as we have argued, this recognition of human shortcoming is part of what Plato understands by a good relationship with the gods. As he argues in *Laws* IV (716a–718c), being religious requires that one accepts that god is the measure of all things, and that humans must observe modesty and moderation in order to please god. Hence, the recognition of our lack of understanding

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17 *Tim.* 40d–e: Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων δαιμόνων εἰπεῖν καὶ γνῶναι τὴν γένεσιν μεῖζον ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς, πειστέον δὲ τοῖς εἰρηκόσιν ἔμπροσθεν, ἐκγόνοις μὲν θεῶν οὖσιν, ὡς ἔφασαν, σαφῶς δέ που τούς γε αὑτῶν προγόνους εἰδόσιν· ἀδύνατον οὖν θεῶν παισὶν ἀπιστεῖν, καίπερ ἄνευ τε εἰκότων καὶ ἀναγκαίων ἀποδείξεων λέγουσιν, ἀλλ' ὡς οἰκεῖα φασκόντων ἀπαγγέλλειν ἑπομένους τῷ νόμῳ πιστευτέον. οὕτως οὖν κατ' ἐκείνους ἡμῖν ἡ γένεσις περὶ τούτων τῶν θεῶν ἐχέτω καὶ λεγέσθω.

with regard to things divine is not a token of agnosticism or relativism. In fact it is the expression of true piety, which prevents a person from holding self-conceited opinions about the gods—or indeed, to take oneself, rather than god, as a measure.

3 Theology and the Power of Images

Despite the absence of an accurate description of the gods in themselves, it remains possible to judge the probable validity of different accounts. As said, the scientific account offered by Timaeus has every chance of being more convincing than other rivalling accounts. The hesitation in speaking about the gods does not prevent Plato from questioning the way in which poets use to depict the gods, and in doing so the patterns laid down in *Republic* II are the touchstone. If poets like Homer and Hesiod represent the gods in inappropriate ways, they must be banished. For indeed, they have given the gods a human shape, thereby divinizing even acts and behaviour that would be repudiated and punished among human beings. It is clear that this utterly human shape—in which the scale of values is even turned upside down, cannot be maintained. It falls short of the criteria of goodness and truthfulness that are laid down as constitutive for our speaking about the gods. Those criteria give us at least some markers along the way, some signals that we are heading in the right direction.

Yet, on the other hand, this certainty about the criteria for our speaking about the gods does not entail any certainty about what the gods want, nor does the certainty that the gods *are* good and trustworthy entail any dogmatic security about the nature of the gods.

As a consequence, we can never be sure if the imagery we use to indicate the gods is the correct one. Reading the *Timaeus*, for example, many people (like T. Johansen)[18] have proposed a literal interpretation of the figure of the Demiurge, stressing that the Demiurge is Plato's alternative to traditional religious beliefs, and that Plato here introduces a supreme god who represents the thinking intellect as a metaphysical/theological principle. I think there are just as many reasons to deny this claim, among others, that, when read in this sense, the Demiurge occupies a very exceptional position in Plato's universe. It is clear from the start of the cosmological discussions in the *Timaeus*, that the Platonic distinction between being and becoming remains firmly in place (as, e.g., *Tim.* 27d–28b). We have the forms and the sensible world—where, then, is

18 Johansen (2004), 87–91.

the Demiurge to be located? Some argue (like S. Menn)[19] that the Demiurge is intellect, and that he is among the forms—but, as Menn himself admits, that would be attributing too active a role to the forms; others (like M. Bordt and A. Lefka)[20] have argued that the Demiurge stands at the top of the intelligible world, over and above the forms—but that contradicts Timaeus' statement that the Demiurge looks up to the Model, which he imprints on sensible things.

Why not accept that this cannot be a literal rendering? Why should we not take seriously Plato's repeated claim that what he is telling is a likely myth? That would open the way, first to a far less metaphysical reading of Plato's theology, as I have ventured to establish in my book (arguing that the Demiurge represents the noetic activity of any of the gods), but it would also bear in mind the caveat that our speaking about the gods is never fully accurate.

Many more examples could be given. They would all lead to the same paradox: true piety involves moderation—and hence, it entails an irreparable lack in our perspective. It warns us that the only correct perspective would be that of the gods themselves. And so we ought to take the god's perspective, but we can't; if on the other hand we take our perspective, we can't say anything trustworthy. How to escape? Isn't the only viable option that we remain silent altogether?

That might well be the case, but Plato does in fact go further than that. We know at least in which direction the divine can be found, we know the patterns our theology has to comply with. We may only speak about the gods with utmost caution, always reminding ourselves and the public that what we say can only be provisory—maybe this is the most pious attitude of all, when taking god as the measure. Thus, Plato ultimately indicates the power of images in a theological context: they allow us to say at least something, but at the same time they bar the road to a direct understanding of things divine. We cannot do without images, but with them, we are equally led astray. Images of the divine, words about the gods (*theologia*) re-present the gods, but at the same time, they stress the unbridgeable distance between us and them—or should we say: they produce the unbridgeable distance? Our images will always be the product of our perspective. In that sense, and returning to the *Sophist*, images of the gods will always pertain to the art of appearance making (*phantastikê technê*) rather than likeness making (*eikastikê technê*). The best a philosopher can do is point out that this is the case, warn people against jumping to conclusions on the

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19 Menn (1995), 43–59.

20 Bordt (2006), 247–248; Lefka (2003), 103–104.

basis of the images, and make people aware of the distance that remains in place. The solution is not to abolish images, nor to produce new ones, as Plato explains in the *Republic*:

> You and I, Adeimantus, aren't poets, but we are founding a city. And it's appropriate for the founders to know the patterns on which poets must base their stories and from which they mustn't deviate. But we aren't actually going to compose their poems for them.[21]
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> *Rep.* II, 378e–379a, tr. G.M.A. GRUBE, rev. C.D.C. REEVE

For indeed, what could the alternative be, if the philosopher were to produce new and better images of the gods? In the best case, it would involve the art of likeness making rather than appearance making. But even if the image maker would be likeness making, 'by keeping to the proportions of length, breadth, and depth of his model, and also by keeping to the appropriate colours of its parts' (*Soph.* 235e, quoted above), the distance would remain: the divine would not be truly revealed. This might even be worse than appearance making, as it would be more difficult still to point out that the image is not trustworthy (the *hyponoia* would be recognizable only to a select audience). Maybe that is the reason why Plato, while arguing against the poets, did not reject traditional representations of the gods. In our dealing with the gods, we are left with nothing but images. They evoke the divine as we understand it, and by that very fact, they prevent us from reaching the divine perspective. But that, I think, is a vital aspect of the power of images, not just in a theological context, but of all images.

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21 *Rep.* II, 378e–379a: Ὦ Ἀδείμαντε, οὐκ ἐσμὲν ποιηταὶ ἐγώ τε καὶ σὺ ἐν τῷ παρόντι, ἀλλ' οἰκισταὶ πόλεως· οἰκισταῖς δὲ τοὺς μὲν τύπους προσήκει εἰδέναι ἐν οἷς δεῖ μυθολογεῖν τοὺς ποιητάς, παρ' οὓς ἐὰν ποιῶσιν οὐκ ἐπιτρεπτέον, οὐ μὴν αὐτοῖς γε ποιητέον μύθους.

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The Power of Plato's Cave

Grace Ledbetter

The allegory of the cave is considered by many readers to be compelling, or even Plato's 'most compelling'[1] image. At the same time, the general consensus would have it that the image is deeply confusing.[2] The individual elements of the allegory pose many difficulties of interpretation, and while Socrates himself asks Glaucon to map the allegory onto the image of the divided line, scholars continue to disagree about whether or how this works.[3] We may reasonably ask, then, what exactly makes the image so compelling. Although scholars have not tackled this question head-on, they have indirectly suggested some answers: the allegory functions protreptically to motivate the emotions;[4] the cave aims to elicit the 'shock of disillusionment about the moral values current in the world of the city as it is …' in its audience;[5] the image 'instills dissatisfaction with the sum total of experience (up till now).'[6] These answers share a common feature: the cave image makes us feel disappointed, shocked, inferior, eager to become better, because it tells us that we are like the prisoners in the cave, that is, we are in a much worse condition than we may have imagined we were in.[7] I would like to make a radically different suggestion. My suggestion is that Plato has designed the cave passage as a whole to make us feel quite the opposite. He has designed it, in fact, to make us feel that we have escaped the cave, and furthermore that our escape is a particularly high stakes enterprise. The success of this design, I will argue, is one of the features that lends the cave image its tremendous power.

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1 Schofield (2007), 216.

2 As Annas (1981), 252 puts it: 'The Cave is Plato's most famous image, dominating many people's interpretation of what Plato's most important ideas are. This is a pity, because, as in the Line, severe problems arise over interpreting the imagery philosophically, and there are persistent disagreements.'

3 Much of the scholarly literature has in fact been devoted to this issue. See Karasmanis (1988) for an overview.

4 Destrée (2012), 117–120.

5 Schofield (2007), 222.

6 Lear (2006), 35.

7 Nightingale (2004), 96, 99 finds in the cave allegory both a 'rhetoric of estrangement' (an attempt to 'uproot and displace us') and a 'highly idealized narrative' that invites us 'to adopt the alterity of the theoretical gaze'.

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The 'story' of the cave could have been told in many different ways, and not all of them would have been as powerful as the version Plato offers. This paper will examine the specific ways that Plato has designed Socrates' narrative and how its seemingly inessential features shape our interpretation of it. I will make two main points. The first concerns how Socrates' complex use of Homeric quotation invests that cave image with a life-or-death significance and an unusual degree of authority. My second and overriding concern is to argue that Plato has designed this passage so that the conversation taking place between Glaucon and Socrates mirrors the prisoner's ascent from the cave. Ultimately I will suggest that the cave narrative gains its power by giving Glaucon, and the reader, an experience analogous to the ascent from the cave that the allegory's image describes.

1 The Structure of The Cave Narrative

While it is easy to say where the allegory begins, it is more difficult to say where it ends. Having just concluded his discussion of the divided line in Book 6, Book 7 opens with Socrates launching straight into the cave allegory: 'Next, I said, compare the effect of education and the lack of it on our nature to an experience like this: Imagine human beings living in an underground, cavelike dwelling …'. This marks an emphatic beginning. But where exactly does 'the allegory of the cave' end? In Catalin Partenie's recent Oxford edition of selected myths of Plato, the passage ends at 517a, and one can see justification for this.[8] At 517a Socrates finishes setting out the details of the image. However, on a different interpretation, the allegory continues past this point. At 517b Socrates begins to interpret the allegory and references to the cave continue on through 520 and beyond. Although these references continue in Socrates' discussion, a case can be made for considering 518d an important ending. 518d is where Socrates reaches what is arguably the moral of the story, his definition of true education. I will examine this definition later, but for now the crucial point is that the allegory of the cave sets out from the start to articulate what education is, and what it is not. Socrates' concern is embedded in the larger discussion of the guardians' education, but it also goes all the way back to Book 1 where Thrasymachus, in a pitch of frustration with Socrates, assumes the wrong definition of education: 'And how am I to persuade you, if you aren't persuaded by what I said just now? What more can I do? Am I to take your argument

8 Partenie (2004), 51–56.

and pour it into your very soul?' 'God forbid! Don't do that!' Socrates replies.[9] This passage from *Republic* 1 humorously illustrates the view of education that Socrates uses the cave allegory to counteract. At 518b–c Socrates finally reveals what the cave allegory has been designed to illustrate: briefly, that 'education is not what some people declare it to be, namely putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes,' but rather 'turning the whole soul' around. For the purposes of this discussion, therefore, let us consider this the ending of the cave allegory.

The passage as a whole falls into two main parts: (1) from 514a through 517a Socrates presents the image, and (2) from 517b through 518d he presents a series of interpretive glosses. References to the cave continue beyond this point, but these continuing references differ in important ways from the interpretive glosses. Socrates explicitly presents interpretive glosses from 517b to 518d as aids to interpreting the image ('This whole image, Glaucon, must be fitted together with what we said before …', 517a8–b1); Socrates interprets the prisoner's upward journey as an ascent to the intelligible realm and the Form of the Good. He describes the prisoner's return to the cave, and then he focuses on the two ways that the eyes can be confused (when they are disoriented by the ascent out of the cave and when they are disoriented by the return back in, which paves the way for his climactic definition of true education). In contrast, the allusions to the cave that continue beyond this point draw out implications that the cave allegory has for the education of the rulers in Socrates' ideal city.[10]

The specific presentation of the cave image reveals Plato's attempt to produce certain effects. Socrates does not simply describe the cave and what happens when a prisoner is led out. That sort of description would be largely in the indicative ('This is what the cave looks like; this is what the prisoners are like, when someone helps guide the prisoner to turn around the following happens …'). We might call such a narrative *straightforwardly descriptive*, and this is not how Socrates proceeds. He speaks only a few sentences at a time; the longest stretch is twelve lines and most are much shorter than that. Even more significantly, he phrases most of his narrative in the form of questions and often as hypothetical, leading questions to which Glaucon must respond: 'Do you suppose … that these prisoner see anything of themselves and one another besides the shadows that the fire casts on the wall in front of them'? (515a5–8); 'If something like this came to pass …' (515c5–6); 'if someone compelled him to look at the light itself … wouldn't he turn around and flee …'? (515e1–2); 'If someone

9 *Rep.*, 345b4–7.

10 See 518e ff.

dragged him away from there by force … wouldn't he be pained …?' (515e6–8); 'If there had been any honors, praises, or prizes among them for the one who was the sharpest at identifying the shadows as they passed by and who best remembered which ones came earlier … do you think that our man would desire these rewards and or envy those among the prisoners who were honored and held power?' (56c8–d4) and so on.

This hypothetical and (non-technically) dialectical structure of Socrates' narrative shapes the passage crucially. Most simply, it engages Glaucon in a way that not all Platonic images engage the interlocutor. Consider for a moment the image of the soul as chariot in the *Phaedrus*, or the images of the soul as sieve and jar in the *Gorgias*. In those passages, Socrates speaks for long stretches of the narrative without interacting with his interlocutor.[11] By contrast, in the allegory of the cave, Socrates spoon-feeds Glaucon the narrative a few lines at a time and formulates it largely in questions. Glaucon is not a mere spectator taking in the image. Almost every step of the way, Socrates demands that Glaucon draw inferences from the image and agree or disagree with the inferences that Socrates draws from it. Even now we can see a point that will come across again even more powerfully: the education that Socrates provides Glaucon in this passage does not 'pour' the image of the cave into Glaucon's soul the way that a straightforward description might attempt to, but rather takes a more gradual and indirect approach that requires Glaucon's active participation.

Socrates' hypothetical questions in fact invite Glaucon to identify with the prisoners, who are, as Socrates says, 'like us' (*homoious hêmin* 515a5). Socrates' questions ask Glaucon to think, experience, and feel what the prisoners generally, and what the one prisoner who gets out in particular, might be thought to think, to experience, and to feel. Socrates asks, for example, 'Do you suppose that these prisoners see anything of themselves and one another besides the shadows that the fire casts on the wall in front of them?' (515a5–8) 'And if they could talk with one another, don't you think they'd suppose that the names they used applied to the things they see passing before them?' (515b4–5); 'Consider, then, what being released from their bonds and cured of their ignorance would naturally be like … When one of them was freed and suddenly compelled to stand up, turn his head, walk, and look up toward the light, he'd be pained and dazzled and unable to see the things whose shadows he'd seen before' (515c4–d1); 'If someone dragged him away from there by force … wouldn't he be pained and irritated with being treated that way?' (515e6–516a1). Socrates invites Glau-

11 See *Phaedrus* 246a–250c7, *Gorgias* 493a–494b.

con to engage not just logically with reasoning about the cave image, but also to identify with the prisoner's thoughts, experience, and emotions. Socrates in fact spends quite a bit of time throughout the passage drawing attention to the difficulty, pain, confusion, irritation, and frustration felt by the prisoner at various stages, and asking Glaucon if that is the way the person would feel.

In summary, the general points I would like to make about the structure of the cave passage are as follows. Firstly, the passage is divided into two main parts, the second of which interprets the image. The presence of this interpretation is interesting in this particular context for what the interpretation may contribute to the persuasive power of the passage and to its effects on Glaucon and the reader. Secondly, I have pointed out that the structure of Socrates' presentation of the image enacts a particular approach to education.[12] If it is fair to say that Socrates attempts to educate Glaucon by discussing this image with him, then it follows that Socrates attempts in this instance to educate Glaucon (and by implication the reader) by a process of inviting him to reason hypothetically about the image and to identify with the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the prisoners.[13] We can see already that a parallel between Glaucon and the prisoners emerges not only in the brief moment when Socrates reveals that the prisoners are 'like us', but *systematically* through Socrates' persistent and explicit attempt to engage Glaucon in a multifaceted identification with the prisoners.

2 The Rhetoric of Ascent

Several of the less obvious features of the cave narrative shape the way the image, and the passage as a whole, work effectively to compel both Glaucon and the reader. A pattern emerges where the content of the image mirrors or has implications for the conversation actually taking place between Glaucon and Socrates. As we shall see, there is a way in which this entire passage is just

12 The image of the cave is enacted by the parallel between the process of education described by the image and the process of education simultaneously taking place between Socrates and Glaucon. In addition to presenting us with an *enacted image*, the allegory of the cave itself offers us a *moving image* since it describes the prisoner's literal and metaphorical movement out of the cave. The cave allegory therefore functions more like a film than like a static photograph.

13 The cave image helps the reader to understand the education of Glaucon, and, at the same time, Socrates' education of Glaucon helps the reader to understand the nature of the world as the cave describes it.

as much about the conversation taking place between Socrates and Glaucon and the particular view of education enacted there as it is about the contents of the cave.

The beginning of any narrative marks an emphatic position and one that bears the double burden of setting the stage and drawing the reader in. Out of the countless ways that Plato could have had Socrates begin the cave allegory, he chooses to emphasize the following elements: the prisoners are in a cave or cave-like dwelling and they have been 'stuck' since childhood. They are 'fettered' 'chained', and in 'bonds'. There is a road or a path (*hodon*, 514b4) in back of them. People in back of them hold up statues behind a wall and these statues create shadows on the wall that the prisoners can see. Socrates emphasizes what the prisoners can and cannot *see*. They cannot see anything of themselves or one another, only the shadows on the wall, which they take to be the things that they are actually only shadows of. They think that the shadows are 'truth'. We are also told from the beginning that this image is designed to show us 'the effect of education or the lack of it on our nature'.

This initial picture we get of the prisoners creates many parallels between the prisoners and the conversation taking place between Glaucon and Socrates. When Glaucon remarks that both the image and the prisoners seem 'strange' (*atopon*, 515a2) to him, Socrates replies with his succinctly disillusioning 'They're like us' (*homoious hêmin*, 515a3). Who exactly is the 'us'? Socrates' remark explicitly fixes a doubling, but in more ways than scholars have recognized. Yes, the prisoners are perhaps like *all* of us in the world at large, and this is the usual interpretation. But the 'us' can also refer specifically to Socrates and Glaucon in the particular situation in which they find themselves. There is a more specific parallel at work here: the prisoners are mistaken about truth; they think that the shadows are the true things. Socrates and Glaucon are mistaken about the true nature and definition of education and that is why they are pursuing this conversation, in order to get clear about what true education is. At this point in the conversation, they have not yet seen what true education is, and at least Glaucon labors under the delusion that education is what others conventionally believe it is, namely, 'putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes' (518b5–6; cf. *Rep.* 1 'pouring the argument into your soul'). The prisoners in the cave have a 'path' (*hodon*, 514b4) in back of them that they must follow by reorienting the direction of their souls. So too, Glaucon and Socrates' philosophical pursuit in this passage is a journey they take in search of getting clearer about the truth regarding education.

The narrative creates additional parallels between the picture we get of the cave and the current conversation between Glaucon and Socrates. Socrates

emphasizes that the prisoners are stuck, fettered, and chained and 'at a loss' (*aporein* 515d7). When Glaucon reacts to Socrates' description by saying, 'It's a strange (*atopos*) image you're describing, and strange (*atopous*) prisoners' (515a3), he too is 'stuck'; he is in a state of *aporia* and he cannot see what Socrates is getting at or what these prisoners are supposed to be. In this regard he is like the prisoners that Socrates has just described. The men in the cave who stand behind the wall hold up statues that create the shadows on the wall that the prisoners see. So too, Socrates at this very moment 'holds up' the image of the cave for Glaucon to see and imagine. Socrates specifically asks Glaucon to 'see' it (*ide*, 514b5). In this regard Socrates plays the role of the carriers who are compared to 'puppeteers' in the cave. More generally, the emphasis that Socrates places in this section on what the prisoner can and cannot *see* (*horan*, 514b1; *heôrakenai*, 515a6) is echoed by the language of sight applied to and used by Glaucon both when Socrates asked him to 'see' the image (514a3 *ide*; 514a2, b5) and when Galucon agrees that he 'sees' (*horô ephê*, 514b8) what Socrates asks him to.

In the following passage from 515c–d, Socrates turns to the antagonistic and painful experience of the prisoner who protests and the guide who forces him to turn around while the prisoner struggles and is still unable to see. The prisoner is 'pained' and 'dazzled' when he is compelled to look toward the light; he is 'unable to see' and 'at a loss'; he is afraid and he 'flees' toward the things that he can see in the cave and which he takes to be real. The prisoner is in a state where, in order to make progress, he now must be 'forced' and 'dragged' up a 'rough steep path' into the sunlight.[14] The prisoner's agitated state is both intellectual and emotional. He is unable to discern the truth clearly, he is confused, and he is pained and so afraid that he turns around and runs away. The difficulty he experiences is complex. He remains attached to his error, both intellectually and emotionally. He can discern falsehood more clearly, so he mistakenly thinks it is the truth. He is at this point unable to apprehend the truth when he turns toward it. At the same time he finds his disorientation painful, confusing, and it inspires fear in him—so much fear that he flees. Socrates tells us something crucial about education here. Education understood as turning toward the truth and grasping it involves emotional upheaval and confusion, and it demands that we endure that upheaval and confusion.[15] As Socrates goes on

14 On puzzles raised by the notion of compulsion here, see Barney (2008).

15 The emotional reactions of interlocutors like Callicles and Thrasymachus to the Socratic elenchus often result in intransigence. Scott (1999) argues that in the *Republic* Plato diagnoses the problem of intransigence as the result of indelible beliefs (caused largely

to explain at 516a, education involves a long process of habituation, as does returning to the cave after one has left it.

Paul Shorey remarked, and there are perhaps many who would agree with him, that the entire passage at 515c–d that I have just described is obviously an 'allegory of the painful experience of one whose false conceit of knowledge is tested by the Socrates *elenchus*'.[16] Shorey's interpretation may be true enough—we see evidence throughout the Platonic dialogues of interlocutors struggling through the Socratic elenchus with both a lack of intellectual clarity and various emotional reactions. However, this interpretation also jumps to a generalization about the Socratic elenchus throughout the dialogues without stopping to ask how this part of the image relates to the particular conversation currently taking place between Socrates and Glaucon. The cave image has now narrowed down to a relationship between two people—the prisoner and the guide who attempts to lead him out. Socrates no longer generalizes about all of the prisoners. In this way the image becomes even more parallel to the one-on-one conversation taking place between Glaucon, and *his* guide, Socrates. As I have already remarked, in the conversation taking place between Glaucon and Socrates, there is a process of education underway, just as there is a process of education underway between the prisoner and his guide. When we consider these parallel situations, we see not only the doubling I have been remarking on, but also the implications that the cave image carries for the conversation taking place between Socrates and Glaucon. Education, the cave image tells us, is a long process that demands that we tolerate confusion and lack of discernment. For Glaucon in this particular conversation, this implies that any confusion he is experiencing at the moment about the nature of education is not incompatible with his actually being educated and progressing in education. Glaucon does not run away from Socrates in fear, but he is certainly still confused and unable to see the whole point of what Socrates is saying with the cave image. The cave image itself, as it applies to his current conversation with Socrates—and Plato's conversation with the reader—suggests that we, and Glaucon, are ourselves undergoing a journey of ascent ('out of the cave') headed toward a clearer understanding of the nature of education. As it applies to Glau-

by the influence of poetry) and irrational desires of the soul. The irrational pain, fear, and desire in the soul have to expel true beliefs (413b9–10) and therefore the guardians in training must be tested repeatedly (see 413cff.) Gill (1985) raises important questions about whether Plato's educational program integrates the training of emotion with the development of intellect.

16 Shorey (1935), 124. See also Elliot's (1967) reading of the entire Cave image as an account and critique of Socratic method.

con and we the readers, the cave image at this point tells us that this enlightenment is not an easy process and requires that we endure a period of confusion.

When Socrates finally explains to Glaucon what it would be like for the prisoner to see the sun directly and to be able to study it, he is quick to focus even more on what the prisoner's attitude would be toward those who are still in the cave and on what it would be like for him to return to the cave (516e–517a). Keep in mind that this is the passage that prepares Glaucon and the reader for the interpretive section of the cave passage, which concludes with Socrates' definition of true education. When, after a long period of adjustment, the prisoner would finally be able to see the sun and study it, he would conclude that the sun 'provides the seasons and the years, governs everything in the visible world, and is in some way the cause of all the things that he used to see' (516b7–9). Socrates proceeds to a more extended, poetically embellished, and somewhat puzzling account of how, if there had been

> any honors, praises, or prizes among them [the prisoners in the cave] for who was the sharpest at identifying shadows as they passed by and who best remembered which usually came earlier, which later, and which simultaneously, and who could thus best divine the future, do you think that our man would desire those rewards or envy those among the prisoners who were honored and held power? Instead, wouldn't he feel, with Homer, that he'd much prefer to 'work the earth as a serf to another, one without possessions,' and go through any sufferings, rather than share their opinions and live as they do?[17]
>
> 516c7–d6

Socrates goes on to remark that if the escaped prisoner returned to the cave, his eyes would now be 'filled with darkness' when he tried to discern things there, and he would become the subject of ridicule among the unenlightened prisoners.

This passage is complex, and we can begin by asking some simple questions: why is Socrates so concerned with the prisoner's attitude to 'honors,' 'praises,'

17 τιμαὶ δὲ καὶ ἔπαινοι εἴ τινες αὐτοῖς ἦσαν τότε παρ' ἀλλήλων καὶ γέρα τῷ ὀξύτατα καθορῶντι τὰ παριόντα, καὶ μνημονεύοντι μάλιστα ὅσα τε πρότερα αὐτῶν καὶ ὕστερα εἰώθει καὶ ἅμα πορεύεσθαι, καὶ ἐκ τούτων δὴ δυνατώτατα ἀπομαντευομένῳ τὸ μέλλον ἥξειν, δοκεῖς ἂν αὐτὸν ἐπιθυμητικῶς αὐτῶν ἔχειν καὶ ζηλοῦν τοὺς παρ' ἐκείνοις τιμωμένους τε καὶ ἐνδυναστεύοντας, ἢ τὸ τοῦ Ὁμήρου ἂν πεπονθέναι καὶ σφόδρα βούλεσθαι "ἐπάρουρον ἐόντα θητευέμεν ἄλλῳ ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ" Hom. *Od.* 11.489 καὶ ὁτιοῦν ἂν πεπονθέναι μᾶλλον ἢ 'κεῖνά τε δοξάζειν καὶ ἐκείνως ζῆν;

and ‘prizes’ in the world of the cave? Why does he quote Homer at this point, and what is the significance of this particular quotation? We need to keep in mind that the passage sets the stage for the interpretive section of the cave image, which immediately follows. It would be reasonable to consider the possibility, then, that Plato crafts this passage of Socrates’ narrative to set Glaucon up to be persuaded by the interpretation that follows. Indeed, I would suggest that, after it lays the groundwork for the conception of the Good that will soon be revealed explicitly, this passage aims to boost Socrates’ (Plato’s) authority about education, and to invest the cave image with a particular sense of seriousness and urgency.

The passage is preoccupied, first of all, with dismantling notions of conventional authority. The cave is the space of conventional life, immersed in error according to Socrates’ account. The inhabitants of the cave give out honors, praises, and prizes to people who, by Socrates’ standards, are unworthy of them. What exactly are these prizes and honors given for? According to Socrates’ account, conventional society honors those who are good at ‘identifying shadows,’ ‘remembering which shadows come earlier, which later, and which simultaneously,’ and who can ‘best divine the future.’ Socrates’ reference to divination signals that one thing he has in mind is religious authority. Scholars have not been puzzled enough by the question of what Socrates means by ‘identifying shadows’ and ‘remembering which shadows come earlier, which later, and which simultaneously’[18] I would suggest that when we look more closely at this formulation it brings something specific to mind closely connected with the reference to those who ‘best divine the future.’ A familiar formulaic line found in the proem to Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the *Odyssey*, and elsewhere attributes poetic knowledge of the ‘past, present, and future’ (*ta t’eonta ta t’essomena pro t’eonta*, *Theog*. 38) to the Muses and other figures with privileged religious-poetic authority.

I would suggest that when Socrates speaks of ‘remembering which shadows come earlier, which later, and which simultaneously’ he alludes to the religious-poetic authority associated with traditional epic poetry and more generally with all poets, rhapsodes, actors, and teachers who make claim to poetry’s authority over the past, present, and future, or are viewed as possessing this authority. This allusion becomes even more apparent in the context of Socrates’

18 Adam (1902) on 516c claims that “Plato is thinking chiefly of the empirical politician and political adviser, who foretells the future from the present and the past (cf. Thuc. I 22), but limits his intellectual horizon by his own experience, and knows nothing of the real determining causes of events. The vast majority of Athenian statesmen belonged in Plato’s opinion to this category.”

mention of prizes, contests and the quotation of Homer that follows. Before we turn to that quotation, it is worth pointing out that in his preparation for overturning what he takes to be the conventional notion of education, Plato has Socrates concentrate on undermining the power of traditional epic poetry. In the context of Plato's critiques of poetry in the *Republic*, we may not find this surprising. What may be surprising, however, is the way that Socrates manipulates Homeric quotation 516d6–7 in order to endow the cave image with a particular kind of persuasive power.

In a climactic moment of the *Odyssey*'s *Nekuia* Odysseus confronts Achilles in such a way that Homer creates a looming sense that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* themselves are finally coming face to face. When Odysseus meets the shade of Achilles in the underworld and attempts to console him, Achilles' poignant and chilling response flouts Odysseus' attempts at flattery: 'O shining Odysseus, never try to console me for dying / I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another / man, one with no land allotted to him and not much to live on / than be king over all the perished dead.'[19] Achilles' position here asserts that being alive, even in a state of abjection, is preferable to being dead. Socrates' use of this quotation, itself placed in a climactic moment of the cave allegory, works in anything but a straightforward way.[20] In Socrates' version, it is the escaped prisoner who would rather be a slave without possessions than share the sufferings and opinions of those in the cave, that is, the sufferings and opinions of conventional people on earth. The *sentiment* in this simile really does apply to both Achilles and the prisoner; both Achilles and the prisoner would rather be a slave without possessions than in a place they do not want to be. However, the simile begins to break down when pressed further. Plato's radical re-contextualizing of the quotation in fact reverses the Homeric idea at work here, namely the idea that ordinary, conventional life on earth is tremendously desirable even in its most lowly form.[21] The prisoner who has escaped from the cave would do anything in order to *avoid* this conventional life. Achilles, it would seem, would rather be in the cave, a part of conventional, everyday life. The reversal at work here is clear, if not perfect: Achilles wants to avoid death at all costs, and would prefer conventional life. The prisoner wants to avoid conventional life at all costs and would prefer, not death, but to get out of the cave.[22]

19 *Odyssey* 11.488–491.

20 According to Yamagata (2012), 136, Plato chooses this quotation for its extraordinary vividness.

21 Fago (1994), 218 notes the reversal and views it as ironic.

22 For excellent discussions of the Homeric undercurrents in the cave allegory more generally, see O'Connor (2007) and Cavarero and Kottman (1996).

This quotation from Homer is not just any quotation, and it is not the only time that Socrates quotes it in the *Republic*.[23] It is arguably the most famous quotation from all of Homer, and it is spoken by Achilles, who is not only the paradigmatic Homeric hero, but also speaks at this point in the *Odyssey* about nothing less than the meaning of life from the vantage point of someone who has obtained the super-wisdom of the dead. Plato's choice of this paradigmatic quotation indicates that the stakes are high. What exactly is at stake here? By integrating the Homeric quotation into the context of Platonic education, Plato associates that education with the very meaning of life (the subject of Achilles' exchange with Odysseus). The suggestion is that the cave analogy does not merely offer a view of what true education is, but it also holds the key to life's value. By re-contextualizing and reversing this prominent Homeric formulation, Plato practices one-upmanship and signals his competition with Homer; he performs a feat of re-appropriation, of rewriting, of usurpation, in order to claim his advantage as an authority on the meaning of life. While Achilles articulates the Homeric view that life, in whatever form, holds tremendous value, Plato contends that the life of one who has escaped the cave is incomparably more valuable than that of a prisoner.

If we now take stock of the passage at 516c–517a as a whole and the role it plays in presenting the image of the cave, we can see that this passage is preoccupied not only with rejecting the value of common opinion, but with identifying that common opinion with poetic and religious authority. Traditionally, the Muses and all of the poets and performers connected with them know the true order of things—the past, present, and future, but in Plato's scheme, it is the escaped prisoner who knows the true order of things. Plato here attacks not only the poets, but also the traditional sources of the poets' authority.[24] Socrates' culminating re-writing and re-contextualization of a famous and poignant Homeric quotation accomplishes something even more undermining than a straightforward rejection of Homer: it subsumes Homer within a new Platonic framework. In this new framework, Homer's characters express an authoritative Platonic vision of what makes life meaningful.

This final section of the cave passage is distinguished by its interpretive register, which lends it the anticipatory tone of a final revelation. It all leads up

23 At *Republic* 386c5–8, Socrates quotes the passage to expunge it on the grounds that it would make the guardians fear death. On the tension between Plato's two uses of this passage see O'Connor (2007) 58.

24 For more on the connection between the allegory of the cave and Plato's critique of poetry see Destrée (2013).

to and culminates in Socrates' articulation of the whole point of the allegory—the definition of the true nature of education at 518b through 518d. The passage as a whole is designed around this final formulation, which brings us back to the very beginning of the allegory where Socrates set out to teach Glaucon something about the nature of education through a comparison. For Glaucon, I will suggest, this final section of the cave passage functions as an ascent. So too, the reader at this point will be especially apt to put herself in the position of the interlocutor because the reader too is eager to know how to interpret the image. Insofar as Glaucon and the reader are made to feel enlightened about how to interpret the image, they themselves experience an ascent, which is what makes the passage as whole so powerful.

At 517b Socrates tells Glaucon that the whole image of the cave must be fitted together with the image of the divided line that he presented previously. Socrates by no means ties up this comparison systematically, and in fact he focuses mostly on revealing that the sun in the visible realm is the analog to the Good in the knowable realm, and when one has seen it one 'must conclude that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful in anything, that it produces both light and its source in the visible realm, and that in the intelligible realm it controls and provides truth and understanding, so that anyone who is to act sensibly in private or public must see it.' (517b9–13). These remarks about the Good might count as Socrates' first interpretive revelation, and it is important to note that they are qualified both by Socrates' admission that 'Whether or not it's true only the god knows' (517b6–7) and by Glaucon's guarded agreement to Socrates' description of the Good: 'I have the same thought, at least as far as I am able' (517c5). Socrates' condensed description of the Good as a cause is also, of course, famously under-elaborated and raises many questions. As a revelation to Glaucon, it is limited, although perhaps promising, and in any case it does not dispel all confusion.

From this point forward, Socrates' narrative is structured as a crescendo. If we divide the sections by topic, they gradually increase in length, culminating in Socrates' revisionary definition of education. Five lines are devoted to repeating a topic that Socrates has just treated, namely that the prisoner who has escaped from the cave will no longer be interested in human affairs (517c6–d1). The following seven lines turn to a variation of a topic that also repeats what Socrates has previously said, namely that if the escaped prisoner does turn toward the human world, he will behave awkwardly and appear ridiculous (517d3–e1). Here we cannot help but be put in mind of Socrates' trial by the choice of examples the narrative makes. The prisoner would appear ridiculous 'if he's compelled, either in the courts or elsewhere, to contend about the shadows of justice.' Note that in the previous section Socrates had also alluded

to himself (in a breach of realism) when he said that if anyone tried to lead the prisoners upward against their will, they would ‘kill him’ ‘if they could somehow get their hands on him’ (517a5–5–6). Having Socrates so pointedly allude to his own future, so well known to us, is a way that Plato inserts himself into the narrative. Plato and his reader know very well that this is Socrates’ fate, and yet when the character Socrates himself unknowingly makes the allusion, we are strikingly made aware that Plato crafts the narrative from a superior vantage point. The following 11 lines—notice that the sections are gradually increasing in length—again repeat a topic already familiar from the previous section. Like the eyes, the soul can be confused in two different ways, ‘when they have come from the light into the darkness *and* when they’ve come from the darkness into the light’ (518a3–4). Socrates seems most concerned to emphasize that we should not be quick to make fun of the person who has come down from above, and who for that reason feels confused and appears ridiculous. All of this prepares for the final and most lengthy section which I consider the finale of the allegory of the cave and which formulates Socrates’ definition of true education over and against the conventional understanding. Education is not what most people think it is, it is not ‘putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes’ (518b5–6). Rather,

> … our present discussion, on the other hand, shows that the power to learn is present in everyone’s soul and that the instrument with which each learns is like an eye that cannot be turned around from darkness to light without turning the whole soul body. This instrument cannot be turned around from that which is coming into being without turning the whole soul until it is able to study that which is and the brightest thing that is, namely what we call the good. Isn’t that right? Yes. Then education is the craft concerned with doing this very thing, this turning around, and with how the soul can most easily and effectively be made to do it. It isn’t the craft of putting sight into the soul. Education takes for granted that sight is there but that it isn’t turned the right way or looking where it ought to look, and it tries to redirect it appropriately.[25]
>
> 518c4–518d7

25 ὁ δέ γε νῦν λόγος, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, σημαίνει ταύτην τὴν ἐνοῦσαν ἑκάστου δύναμιν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τὸ ὄργανον ᾧ καταμανθάνει ἕκαστος, οἷον εἰ ὄμμα μὴ δυνατὸν ἦν ἄλλως ἢ σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι στρέφειν πρὸς τὸ φανὸν ἐκ τοῦ σκοτώδους, οὕτω σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ ἐκ τοῦ γιγνομένου περιακτέον εἶναι, ἕως ἂν εἰς τὸ ὂν καὶ τοῦ ὄντος τὸ φανότατον δυνατὴ γένηται ἀνασχέσθαι θεωμένη: τοῦτο δ’ εἶναί φαμεν τἀγαθόν. ἦ γάρ; ναί.τούτου τοίνυν, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, αὐτοῦ τέχνη ἂν εἴη, τῆς περιαγωγῆς, τίνα τρόπον ὡς ῥᾷστά τε καὶ ἀνυσιμώτατα μεταστραφήσεται, οὐ τοῦ ἐμποιῆσαι αὐτῷ τὸ ὁρᾶν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἔχοντι μὲν αὐτό, οὐκ ὀρθῶς δὲ τετραμμένῳ οὐδὲ βλέποντι οἷ ἔδει, τοῦτο διαμηχανήσασθαι.

This final revelation, the moral of the story for the cave allegory, clarifies some matters, and leaves unanswered questions about others. Both Glaucon and the reader now know that the whole soul must be turned around in education, with all of the attendant confusion and frustration that entails. Education, moreover, does not function according to a transmission model where the teacher puts knowledge into the soul that it did not previously have. Instead, a true educator 'redirects' the whole soul, suggesting that the entire person, including his intellectual and sensory faculties, as well as his desires, undergo a transformative reorientation. Glaucon may now have a better understanding of what Socrates means by true education, but it would be reasonable for him to have some remaining questions. For example, Socrates claims that education is not a matter of putting knowledge ('sight') into souls that lack it. However, he does not make it clear—at least here—why obtaining knowledge of the good does not count as putting new knowledge into the soul. The theory of recollection might help explain this, but Socrates does not appeal to that theory here. Questions might also be said to remain about what this total and painful reorientation of the soul really amounts to—what exactly makes this process involve such upheaval of the entire person? The success of the cave allegory, however, does not depend on its having tied up all loose ends. Recall that the theory of education elaborated throughout the cave image posits that confusion and frustration are not unfortunate by-products of the educational process, but necessary for the process to move forward. Glaucon's 'ascent' in understanding the nature of true education is therefore perfectly compatible with his—and the reader's—remaining confused about certain elements. Socrates' final definition of education at the conclusion of the cave allegory is designed to make us recognize that through the process of thinking (and feeling) through the image of the cave, Glaucon is himself being educated.

In conclusion, then, Plato has designed Socrates' cave narrative so that the conversation between Glaucon and Socrates in many ways mimics the content of the image itself. This mimesis is achieved through verbal and thematic parallels, and, most fundamentally, through the fact that the prisoner and Glaucon are simultaneously led through a process of ascent. Socrates invites Glaucon to identify with the prisoners both intellectually and emotionally. Socrates accomplishes this by presenting the image through a series of questions that require Glaucon to draw inferences about what the prisoners would feel and think. Socrates' educates Glaucon in a way that opposes both Thrasymachus' suggestion that an argument be poured down Socrates' throat, and what Socrates takes to be the conventional understanding of education as putting new knowledge into the soul. The prisoner's ascent from the cave to his vision of the Good is mirrored dynamically in the conversation between

Glaucon and Socrates, where Glaucon moves gradually from a state of aporia to Socrates' final, revisionary definition of education. Glaucon does not ascend to a vision of the Forms and the Good as the prisoner does, but he ascends analogously to an enlightened view of education.[26] The notion of ascent is made especially vivid by the crescendo structure leading up to the final definition.[27] Insofar as the reader identifies with Glaucon or simply plays the part of a reader interested in how to interpret the image, the reader will experience this ascent. The notion of education formulated by the cave image, where education requires not only intellectual insight, but also considerable confusion and upheaval, has implications for how we interpret Glaucon's own education in this passage. Among other things, it suggests that any lingering confusion that Glaucon (or the reader) may have is compatible with his having made actual progress. Finally, through his bold re-appropriation of Homer and what turns out to be a reversal of a prominent Homeric formulation, Plato aims to boost his own authority on the subject of education, to identify Platonic education as critical to the meaning of life, and thereby to enhance the power of the cave image itself.

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27 We could say that the crescendo structure of the narrative provides an additional level of imagery—an auditory image of an intellectual phenomenon.

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Political Images of the Soul

Olivier Renaut

Introduction

Political images of the soul consist of comparisons, analogies, metonymies, synecdoches and metaphors that compare the nature, parts, and functioning of the soul with those of a city. Plato uses these images in his dialogues to convey a clearer knowledge of the soul, of its mechanisms and of the way it should be ruled and ordered. It is difficult to draw up a strict typology of them,[1] but Plato employs political images in at least three ways, especially within the framework of the *Republic*'s city-soul analogy.

Firstly, Plato makes use of a strict comparison between the city and the soul: this is how the city-soul analogy is first introduced in book II of the *Republic*. Since justice is an attribute of both individuals and cities, the city constitutes a larger frame for elucidating what justice is. Provided that the concept of justice is taken to be identical both in the soul and in the city, the differences between civil justice and individual justice are expected, at first, to be differences only of size and clarity. However, on a second level, this initial comparison becomes an analogy. As justice proves to be an order between functions and classes, the analogy sees the city and the soul as structural entities, each having three functions or parts. Socrates establishes similarity and dissimilarity between relations and structures, not only between two realities. Moreover, to the analogical isomorphism is added the fact that individuals are presented as 'parts' of a bigger whole, viz. the city, making the relations between the two analogous entities more intricate, somehow obscure. Then, something which could not have at first been expected, the analogy becomes a way to explain how politics influences psychology and vice versa. Lastly, a third way of using political images of the soul is the metaphor. A political metaphor of the soul occurs when, for example, one compares the functioning of the soul to a theater or a public debate, or to a differentiated topological and political space, without explicating the analogous relation between the vehicle and the tenor.

1 Two difficult issues arise here: first, can we draw a systematic typology of images in Plato's dialogues as we can in contemporary poetics, distinguishing comparison from analogy, metaphors, etc.? Second, as this volume shows, images can have different functions. On these two points, see Pender (2000) esp. 11–18 on metaphors and analogies in literal language.

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These metaphors may be consequences of a certain use of the city-soul analogy, suppressing the logical links that should keep the two entities distinct. In a way, we can consider them as a loose use of the city-soul analogy, playing with imaginary and vivid substitutions (a bragging mother standing for the appetitive function of the soul, a lion standing for the *thumos*). On the other hand, blurring the lines between vehicle and tenor may have a deeper significance: the metaphor could serve as a tool for producing real substitutions, for instance when civil law replaces absent reason in the soul of a citizen. In this case, the metaphor is not a consequence of the initial analogy but rather a normative tool that goes beyond the analogy and that has genuine effects on the organization of the soul's structure.

The use of political images is, in fact, an ancient practice.[2] Many actions we moderns would rather qualify as psychological are drawn from a political model: deliberation or psychic conflict, for instance, may be interpreted as an internalized public process, for example in Homer and in tragedy.[3] But another origin of these comparisons is to be found in the well-known analogy between the city and the universe that we find, for example, in the Presocratics.[4] Finally, interactions between individuals and the political community they belong to were worthy of inquiry before Plato, found especially in the Hippocratic corpus and in Thucydides.[5] More precisely, the relationship between private and public spheres, and, all the more, the prevalence of what is in the common interest over what is of only individual interest, also give rise to analogies concerning events that affect both the community and its individuals (natural plagues, war and peace, wealth and poverty, inherited cultural characters and customs defining the individual, etc.)[6] These three heritages

2 See Brock (2013) who gives a full account of various metaphors from Homer to the fourth century applied to politics.

3 See Gill (1995) for the idea that in Homer and in tragedy, deliberation is an internalized public debate among conflicting values.

4 In Renaut and Macé (2013), we argue that the analogy between the city and the universe found especially in Heraclitus, which claims that the role of the sage is beneficial for the city whose law derives from that of the cosmos, is the basis of a new Platonic challenge: how philosophers, in a hostile community, should communicate their true knowledge of the common good.

5 See especially Demont (2009) for a precise overview of the problem. On Thucydides, see Morrison (1994).

6 On the interaction between public and private in ancient literature from Homer to Plato, see Macé (2012).

combined offer many bases for Plato to make political images of the soul understandable and efficacious for his audience.

But what then, exactly, is the 'power' of such metaphors, if they have any? What does Plato intend in his use of political vocabulary for describing a psychological state or functioning? In what follows, I argue that his main purpose is to produce, by way of metaphors, a new politicized psychology. Political metaphors are intended to justify how reason in individuals must be paired with public law in order to create virtue among citizens. Relying on the obvious fact that political structures interact with psychological traits, as the city-soul analogy demonstrates at the risk of logical incoherence, Plato goes beyond mere isomorphism by using a linguistic tool: making individuals think of their soul as a little city (and reciprocally their city as an expansion of a well-ordered psychological structure) is presented as a key means to attaining the rule of reason. Political images of the soul are a center piece of a rhetorical strategy[7] for justifying the rule of law, especially to non-philosophers whose weakened rational capacity should be supported by non-rational representations and imagery.

1 The Scope of the City-Soul Analogy

The city-soul analogy has been variously interpreted, and it is useful, to begin with, to investigate what scope it has within the *Republic*. According to the famous passage in book II (368c7–369a3) which introduces the psycho-political framework, a strict comparison between a smaller entity (justice in the individual) and a larger frame (justice in the city) may help in discovering what justice is. Because 'justice' is a predicate that can be attributed both to the city and the individual, their comparison can reveal the essence of justice through the sameness of its *idea* in both cases.[8] A 'godsend' (*hermaion*) positing the unity of the form of justice and the sameness of its appearance and meaning makes this comparison possible—it implies that we think of the city as a large individual and of the individual as a small city, at least as far as the justice they manifest is concerned. As is well known, in book IV the strict comparison becomes an analogy, following a complex path, and risking, it has been argued, a loss of consistency in the initial program. The analogy transforms a mere heuris-

7 I borrow this expression from Blössner's (2007) fine analysis of the city-soul analogy. However, in what follows, I do not take this rhetorical strategy to be logically flawed. My intention is not to defend the validity of the city-soul analogy but to show how metaphors are actually part of a persuasive strategy to institute the rule of reason.

8 As Pradeau (1997) 25–26 rightly points out.

tic tool into a rhetorical device in order to match the soul's structure and its political environment. The problem, according to B. Williams' famous analysis, is that this inference is grounded on a loose use of the initial comparison: the city being used as a model for individual justice and then as an effect of the latter. 'Parts and wholes' problems occur when we apply the analogy beyond its heuristic scope—and that is Plato's mistake; to the original comparison he adds the extra fact that individuals are 'parts' of the whole which is the city, in such a way that the analogy is potentially taken into an infinite regress, blurring the difference between the model and the image, the vehicle and the tenor.[9]

What appears to be a logical problem has, on the contrary, been interpreted as a force of the analogy, even as its goal. If we take it that the tripartite psychology is grounded in the nature of the soul, i.e. has a descriptive value, whereas the city's organization is obviously prescriptive, then we must be of the opinion that the soul's structure should be the model for civic organization. But the reverse is also true: the individuals are indeed influenced by the character of the city and by institutions. In this case, the functioning of the city should help us to find the structure of the soul. This two-way causality implied and expressed through the analogy is precisely what J. Lear recognizes in the *Republic*. Soul and city are linked by way of 'internalization' and 'exteriorization' of both moral and civil values and virtues.[10]

The truth remains that the logic of the argument appears somehow flawed, and a 'metaphorical' interpretation of psycho-political interaction should be preferred to a causal understanding of the argument.[11] In other words, the efficiency of the city-soul analogy is not grounded on valid relations between its elements but rather on its plausibility and its metaphorical efficiency.[12] Thus, political metaphors of the soul should be understood as a loose way of expressing a basic mutual influence between city and soul. Being intentionally loose ways of showing the link between city and individuals, they can be interpreted as shorter paths to mould and educate those who are not philosophers.[13]

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9 Williams (1973) 257.

10 Lear (1992).

11 Ferrari (2005) 50–53.

12 Blössner (2007) 358–360.

13 A philosopher who does not owe anything to the city he belongs to, may not be sensible to such metaphors, being aware that his soul is not molded by the city in which he grew up. That does not mean that he denies that there are causal interactions; but he won't credit the use of a metaphor of the "swarm" for example, as it is the case for educated guardians in 520b–c.

A shift from comparison and analogy to the metaphorical is clear in book IV, where Socrates seems to suggest that the character of the community derives from that of the individuals who compose or rule it.

> Well, then, we are surely compelled to agree that each of us has within himself the same species and characteristics as the city? Where else would they come from? It would be ridiculous for anyone to think that spiritedness didn't come to be in cities from such individuals as the Thracians, Scythians, and others who live to the north of us who are held to possess spirit, or that the same isn't true of the love of learning, which is mostly associated with our part of the world, or of the love of money, which one might say is conspicuously displayed by the Phoenicians and Egyptians.[14]
>
> *Rep.* 435e1–436a3, trans. GRUBE & REEVE, slightly modified

Plato may borrow this typology from the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, waters and places* (§ 12–16), where the physician shows that some types of character (*êthê*) are the result of the combination of nature (geographical characteristics, climate, etc.), of law, and of political constitution.[15] In this typology, it is not clear which comes first: the psychological and individual characteristics or the natural and political ones. For although the character of the city *comes from its members*, the city seems in return to *promote* and *transmit* psychological and individual character traits. The problem is the meaning we are prepared to give to the expression 'species and characteristics' (*eidê te kai êthê*). The simplest interpretation is to understand *eidê* as 'appearance' or 'characteristics', that is, almost as a synonym for *êthê*.[16] It would mean that at least a majority of people in the city manifest the same characteristics that the city is famous for.[17]

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14 Ἆρ' οὖν ἡμῖν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, πολλὴ ἀνάγκη ὁμολογεῖν ὅτι γε τὰ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἔνεστιν ἡμῶν εἴδη τε καὶ ἤθη ἅπερ ἐν τῇ πόλει; οὐ γάρ που ἄλλοθεν ἐκεῖσε ἀφῖκται. γελοῖον γὰρ ἂν εἴη εἴ τις οἰηθείη τὸ θυμοειδὲς μὴ ἐκ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐγγεγονέναι, οἳ δὴ καὶ ἔχουσι ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν, οἷον οἱ κατὰ τὴν Θρᾴκην τε καὶ Σκυθικὴν καὶ σχεδόν τι κατὰ τὸν ἄνω τόπον, ἢ τὸ φιλομαθές, ὃ δὴ τὸν παρ' ἡμῖν μάλιστ' ἄν τις αἰτιάσαιτο τόπον, ἢ τὸ φιλοχρήματον τὸ περὶ τούς τε Φοίνικας εἶναι καὶ τοὺς κατὰ Αἴγυπτον φαίη τις ἂν οὐχ ἥκιστα.

15 On this point, see Renaut (2014) 261–264.

16 This is how Crombie interprets the term, as 'behaviour-propensities', Crombie (1962) 344. In support of this view, the term spiritedness (*thumoeides*) seems to mean a character rather than a psychic function.

17 This is a reading supported later in book VIII, when Socrates declares: "And do you realize

But *eidê* can also mean 'part' and 'function', or even 'class' when applied to the parts of the city (which are more usually called *genê*).[18] In this case, which does not exclude the simpler interpretation but rather contains it, what Socrates is saying is that each member of a city possesses three psychological *eidè* whose structural order and development produces a character trait as well as, by extension, the reputation of a city. Scythians and Thracians are called 'spirited' *metaphorically*, for some of them (especially notorious warriors) present an ordering of their soul in which spiritedness (*thumoeides*) holds the reins over reason and desire. There is a transfer of a character trait held by some individual people over to the whole value system of an entire people, and this contamination is indeed metaphorical (to be precise, it is a synecdoche, for we use some of its parts to refer to the city as a whole). But it would be an error not to see that this ordering of a soul does not, in return, depend upon cultural and political factors. Just as Macrocephali in the Hippocratic treatise shape the cranial form of their new-born members (*A.W.P.* 14), in this passage it is cities and communities that fashion the customs of their citizens and promote psychological traits. That is the reason why this psychological typology is included in a geographical one. Values and customs are fashioning what is actually valued in individuals' behavior. The city's institutions fully interact with the tripartite psychology, in a metaphorical way. In this passage, the analogy is clearly a means for Plato to make the two wholes, city and soul, communicate and interact, through internalization of common values, and exteriorization of these values through action and service as a role model.[19] The city, being composed of citizens having souls, should organize

that of necessity there are as many forms of human character (ἀνθρώπων εἴδη) as there are of constitutions? Or do you think that constitutions are born 'from oak or rock' and not from the characters of the people who live in the cities governed by them, which tip the scales, so to speak, and drag the rest along with them?" (*Rep.* VIII, 544d6–e2)

18 We find the expression τριῶν γενῶν at 435b10, τριττὰ γένη φύσεων at 435b5 and b7. But the term εἶδος is also employed at 435b2: τὸ τοῦ πολεμικοῦ εἶδος in reference to the auxiliaries; likewise, εἶδος is implied in the expression τὸ τοῦ βουλευτικοῦ καὶ φύλακος for the guardians at 435b3. According to Cooper (1998) 120 n. 4, Plato anticipates the exposition of a functional psychology and I agree with this interpretation. For a thorough analysis of this passage, see Kühn (1994). Even if Kühn rejects Cooper's interpretation of the meaning of *eidè* (51 n. 8), he agrees that this passage consists of a shift from a typology of characters to a functional psychology.

19 Lear (1992) 195: "Plato's point (435e) is not that a spirited *polis*, say, is spirited simply in virtue of having spirited citizens, but in having spirited citizens who are successful in shaping the *polis* in their image."

those citizens into groups based on their characters and dispositions; in return, this typology influences the structure of the citizen's souls depending on who should rule the city and give it its distinctive feature. Tripartite psychology pervades the city's organization, and vice versa, to such an extent that one could argue that Plato, by means of the analogy, politicizes the soul, and brings psychology into politics.[20] In other words, political metaphors should be seen as a normative attempt to shape the citizens' character and *psyche* in accordance with justice.

Metaphors are not only rhetorical devices, they have real effects on the behavior of citizens. This linguistic mechanism is not in the least incidental.[21] Political metaphors and analogies are, firstly, an expression of the actual interweaving between psychology and politics, but they are also linguistic means for shaping our own perception of civic and psychic order. Part of the scope of the city-soul analogy is precisely to make this interweaving possible, through political images of the soul.

2 Political Analogies and Metaphors at Work

Political vocabulary tends to pervade psychological descriptions, as when we think of our soul as a city, for example when Glaucon speaks of a "guardian [who] needs a guardian,"[22] or when Socrates analyzes verbal expressions comparing struggles of the soul to an internal war. These expressions are more important than usually thought, especially when, as we will see later, they are used for non-philosophers.

In *Republic* IV, the popular expression 'to be stronger than oneself' (430e11–431b2) is taken as an example of a metaphor which helps in understanding psychological agency.[23]

20 Vegetti (1998) 40–41.

21 In book VIII, 560d1–561a1, Plato explains, quoting Thucydides, how in democracy public discourses that rename values and virtues create a psychic *stasis*. On this point see Loraux (1986); Desclos (2003) 158–161.

22 *Rep.* III, 403e. See also *Rep.* VIII, 549b4.

23 On the use of the metaphor to define agency and personality, especially in book VIII and IX, see Cairns in this volume. According to Pender (2000) 206–213, political images of the soul in the *Republic* are 'cognitively irreducible and so become an integral, irreplaceable part of Plato's theory' (206). But, as we shall see, the goal of these images is not only illustrative but normative.

> Yet isn't the expression 'to be stronger than oneself' ridiculous? The stronger self that does the controlling is the same as the weaker self that gets controlled, so that only one person is referred to in all such expressions.
>
> Of course.
>
> Nonetheless, the expression is apparently trying to indicate that, in the soul of that very person, there is a better part and a worse one and that, whenever the naturally better part is in control of the worse, this is expressed by saying that the person is self-controlled (*enkrates*) or master of himself. At any rate, one praises someone by calling him self-controlled. But when, on the other hand, the smaller and better part is overpowered by the mass of the worse, because of bad upbringing or bad company, this is called being self-defeated or licentious and is a reproach.[24]
>
> *Rep.* IV, 430e11–431b2. trans. GRUBE & REEVE, slightly modified

This simple expression, 'to be stronger than oneself', is a 'clue' (430e9) in language to reveal what the virtue of moderation is. Moderation, we are told, is a kind of *enkrateia*, i.e. the ability for reason to take over desires. But obviously, this idea of self-control is a consequence of an analogical transfer. To be 'stronger than oneself' presupposes an internalization of the opposition of at least two agents, one stronger, the other weaker.[25] The metaphor reveals, then, a difference between at least two 'parts' or even 'selves'; a better and a worse. This way of defining personality and agency occurs just before Socrates explains how the agent's soul consists of three 'functions', each pursuing a proper object

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24 Οὐκοῦν τὸ μὲν κρείττω αὑτοῦ γελοῖον; ὁ γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ κρείττων καὶ ἥττων δήπου ἂν αὑτοῦ εἴη καὶ ὁ ἥττων κρείττων· ὁ αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐν ἅπασιν τούτοις προσαγορεύεται. Τί δ' οὔ; Ἀλλ', ἦν δ' ἐγώ, φαίνεταί μοι βούλεσθαι λέγειν οὗτος ὁ λόγος ὥς τι ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τὸ μὲν βέλτιον ἔνι, τὸ δὲ χεῖρον, καὶ ὅταν μὲν τὸ βέλτιον φύσει τοῦ χείρονος ἐγκρατὲς ᾖ, τοῦτο λέγειν τὸ κρείττω αὑτοῦ—ἐπαινεῖ γοῦν—ὅταν δὲ ὑπὸ τροφῆς κακῆς ἤ τινος ὁμιλίας κρατηθῇ ὑπὸ πλήθους τοῦ χείρονος σμικρότερον τὸ βέλτιον ὄν, τοῦτο δὲ ὡς ἐν ὀνείδει ψέγειν τε καὶ καλεῖν ἥττω ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἀκόλαστον τὸν οὕτω διακείμενον.

25 On *enkrateia* as a model for defining moderation in the *Republic*, see Dorion (2007). Dorion shows how *enkrateia* is dismissed in the first dialogues like the *Charmides*, and partially restored in the middle and late dialogues. This rehabilitation has two important consequences: first, *enkrateia* supposes at least a bi-partition of the soul and, second, *enkrateia* is understood not as a force distinct from reason but rather the action of reason, together with *thumos*, upon desires and pleasures. Dorion stresses the necessity of re-elaborating metaphors (kingship and slavery) to account for this new definition of moderation (see esp. pp. 132–133). It is not by accident that these metaphors are political, as we shall see in the *Laws*.

and opposing the others with its force and motivation: the rational part (*logistikon*) is a calculative or rational function, the spirited part (*thumos*) is a function that enables things to be valued, thus committing the individual to a set of values, while the appetitive part (*epithumêtikon*) refers to desires.

It should be emphasized that this metaphor has, for Socrates, a clear political meaning.[26] First, the order of one's soul is compared with a political power of one part of the city over another part, establishing a hierarchical relation between the two. Secondly, the 'self' in this expression is presented altogether as part of a larger community that potentially praises or blames it, the better part being associated, if not identified, with the few better 'men' in the city and, reciprocally, the worse part being explicitly associated with 'bad company'. Thirdly, as the mention of 'upbringing' suggests, moderation understood as *enkrateia* may be an effect of the direct influence of politics over the non-philosophers that constitute the majority of the city.

The metaphor, whose vehicle is political and tenor psychological, is then reapplied to the city, reversing the roles of that which is compared and that which is being compared to. We may call a city 'stronger than itself' when the 'wisdom and desires' of the better men (where true moderation lies, for they have knowledge) control the desires of "children, women, household slaves, and in those of the inferior majority who are called free" (431b9–c3). This explanation is partly based on the city-soul analogy, for wisdom is identified with the guardians, whereas vile desire is represented by another category of people. But we are also clearly beyond the analogy here, for guardians are not just the 'reason' of the city, but also have good and educated *desires* (431c5–7) which they can communicate to those they rule, at least through laws, prescriptions and bans, praise and blame. And this is the true sense of moderation in the city: it is not enough that base citizens be ruled by better men, they also have to *agree* on who should rule the city and, consequently, their own desire (431d9–e2). A city is then moderate when all its members agree on the hierarchical relationship between the classes, desires and pleasures contained by the effect of wisdom, in the case of the guardians, and by true opinion, in the case of the rest of the city.

In conclusion to this passage (430e11–431b2), we may argue that two senses of moderation are set out. First, a popular one, that can be applied to individuals, when one obeys his reason or true opinion in order to contain his desires and pleasures. This popular definition is grounded in the political metaphor of the king (reason) and the slaves (desires). Second, a political one, which is

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26 As Morgan (2003) showed, comparing this passage with *Gorgias* 491c6–e1, pp. 194–198.

applied to a city, when their members are supposed to obey their good rulers with respect to what is desirable and what must not be desired. But this interpretation would miss the point. It may not be logically necessary for a 'moderate' city to rely on the true moderation of its members, for Socrates accepts that the individuals are mostly not moderate. But would a political agreement or consensus on who should rule the city be sufficient? It appears that it is not the case. Such an agreement presupposes a community regarding affections, pleasures and pains, making the city united among its members (*Rep.* V, 462a9–e3) so that "the city is most like a single person" (462c10). Hence, we can at least affirm that the metaphor of 'self-control' applied to the city conveys a derived meaning of moderation that *enjoins* the citizens to show a transferred moderation or self-mastery.[27]

This first political metaphor was meant to reveal the definition of moderation applied to the city. Oddly, Socrates used the psychological model of 'self-control' to define it more precisely, and we have seen that the initial vehicle of the metaphor was political, to explain, in a more vivid and imaginary way, what moderation in an individual soul was. The function of the political metaphor is quite clear here: it is based on the logically false but efficacious identification between elements which are only analogous. The metaphor, to put it briefly, altogether expresses and creates an interweaving between city and individuals, the latter being 'parts' of the former. The same metaphorical process is observed when Socrates defines moderation in the individual soul. The provisional definition of moderation as 'self-control' is now deepened thanks to another political metaphor.

> And isn't he moderate because of the friendly and harmonious relations between these same parts, namely, when the ruler and the ruled believe in common that the rational part should rule and don't engage in civil war against it?
>
> Moderation is surely nothing other than that, both in the city and in the individual.[28]
>
> *Rep.* IV, 442c10–d3

27 Jeon (2014) convincingly argues for the necessity of there being a whole-part causal causation at work in the *Republic*, especially for the class of the producers, where political values are closely connected with personal values and goals. See esp. pp. 195–202.

28 Τί δέ; σώφρονα οὐ τῇ φιλίᾳ καὶ συμφωνίᾳ τῇ αὐτῶν τούτων, ὅταν τό τε ἄρχον καὶ τὼ ἀρχομένω τὸ λογιστικὸν ὁμοδοξῶσι δεῖν ἄρχειν καὶ μὴ στασιάζωσιν αὐτῷ; Σωφροσύνη γοῦν, ἦ δ' ὅς, οὐκ ἄλλο τί ἐστιν ἢ τοῦτο, πόλεώς τε καὶ ἰδιώτου.

To define moderation in individuals, Socrates resorts to the political metaphor of civic friendship (*philia*), concord (*symphonia*) and agreement on who should be in command (*homodoxia*). In contrast, those who are not moderate are compared to individuals involved in a civil war (*stasis*), which is also the image Socrates later uses to define injustice.[29] Conflicting judgments of value are compared with factions; to bring *stasis* to an end, the better men should rule the worse part of the city, and the whole soul should be ruled by reason. This metaphor is a perfect mirror of the first one, dealing with political moderation: to define individual moderation, Socrates takes a political metaphor which is already steeped in psychology.

What can we infer from this use of the psycho-political metaphor to define both moderation in the city and in the individual? One solution would be to understand that it is meant to be a linguistic way of defining neither the city's nor the individual's virtue *alone*, but rather the citizen's, i.e. the individual *in* the city, or the city as composed by individuals. The legislator uses the metaphor as a rhetorical means to enjoin the citizens not only to unify their souls but also to obey their rulers and to feel like a genuine part of the city. Each individual becomes, in a way, his own guardian, calling for civic and collective feelings of strategy, courage and obedience, whenever a psychological conflict occurs.[30]

At the end of book IV, Socrates puts his definition of justice in the individual to the test of 'ordinary situations':

> For example, if we had to come to an agreement about whether someone similar in nature and training to our city had embezzled a deposit of gold

29 *Rep.* IV, 444b1–8: "Surely, it must be a kind of civil war between the three parts, a meddling and doing of another's work, a rebellion by some part against the whole soul in order to rule it inappropriately. The rebellious part is by nature suited to be a slave, while the other part is not a slave but belongs to the ruling class. We'll say something like that, I suppose, and that the turmoil and straying of these parts are injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, ignorance, and, in a word, the whole of vice." On this blurring of the lines between justice and moderation, see Larson (1951) 407.

30 See for example the way Leontius resorts to public opinion as a law to resolve his psychic conflict, (*Rep.* IV, 439e6–440a7). It is not a coincidence that we find the term πολεμεῖν (440a5–6) to describe the way anger struggles with desires. The sensitivity of the honest man's *thumos* to justice, when he is victim to an injustice, requires an opinion of what is just, and it is for this that he will 'fight' (συμμαχεῖ τῷ δοκοῦντι δικαίῳ). (*Rep.* IV, 440c8) On these passages, see Renaut (2014) 171–175.

> or silver that he had accepted, who do you think would consider him to have done it rather than someone who isn't like him?
>
> No one.
>
> And would he have anything to do with temple robberies, thefts, betrayals of friends in private life or of cities in public life?
>
> No, nothing.
>
> And he'd be in no way untrustworthy in keeping an oath or other agreement.
>
> How could he be?
>
> And adultery, disrespect for parents, and neglect of the gods would be more in keeping with every other kind of character than his.
>
> With every one.
>
> And isn't the cause of all this that every part within him does its own work, whether it's ruling or being ruled?
>
> Yes, that and nothing else.
>
> Then, are you still looking for justice to be something other than this power, the one that produces men and cities of the sort we've described?
>
> No, I certainly am not.
>
> Then the dream we had has been completely fulfilled—our suspicion that, with the help of some god, we had hit upon the origin and pattern of justice right at the beginning in founding our city.[31]
>
> *Rep.* IV, 442e4–443c2

All these ordinary situations are precise cases where law, whether codified or not, is at stake. The kind of justice Socrates is looking for by means of the analogy is some kind of civic virtue, a virtue anyone can practice in a city, and not justice in the individual, regardless of social and political conditions. The

31 Οἷον εἰ δέοι ἡμᾶς ἀνομολογεῖσθαι περί τε ἐκείνης τῆς πόλεως καὶ τοῦ ἐκείνῃ ὁμοίως πεφυκότος τε καὶ τεθραμμένου ἀνδρός, εἰ δοκεῖ ἂν παρακαταθήκην χρυσίου ἢ ἀργυρίου δεξάμενος ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀποστερῆσαι, τίν' ἂν οἴει οἰηθῆναι τοῦτον αὐτὸ δρᾶσαι μᾶλλον ἢ ὅσοι μὴ τοιοῦτοι; Οὐδέν' ἄν, ἔφη. Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἱεροσυλιῶν καὶ κλοπῶν καὶ προδοσιῶν, ἢ ἰδίᾳ ἑταίρων ἢ δημοσίᾳ πόλεων, ἐκτὸς ἂν οὗτος εἴη; ἐκτός. Καὶ μὴν οὐδ' ὁπωστιοῦν γ' ἂν ἄπιστος ἢ κατὰ ὅρκους ἢ κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας ὁμολογίας. Πῶς γὰρ ἄν; Μοιχεῖαί γε μὴν καὶ γονέων ἀμέλειαι καὶ θεῶν ἀθεραπευσίαι παντὶ ἄλλῳ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ τοιούτῳ προσήκουσι. Παντὶ μέντοι, ἔφη. Οὐκοῦν τούτων πάντων αἴτιον ὅτι αὐτοῦ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ἕκαστον τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττει ἀρχῆς τε πέρι καὶ τοῦ ἄρχεσθαι; Τοῦτο μὲν οὖν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο. Ἔτι τι οὖν ἕτερον ζητεῖς δικαιοσύνην εἶναι ἢ ταύτην τὴν δύναμιν ἣ τοὺς τοιούτους ἄνδρας τε παρέχεται καὶ πόλεις; Μὰ Δία, ἦ δ' ὅς, οὐκ ἔγωγε. Τέλεον ἄρα ἡμῖν τὸ ἐνύπνιον ἀποτετέλεσται, ὃ ἔφαμεν ὑποπτεῦσαι ὡς εὐθὺς ἀρχόμενοι τῆς πόλεως οἰκίζειν κατὰ θεόν τινα εἰς ἀρχήν τε καὶ τύπον τινὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης κινδυνεύομεν ἐμβεβηκέναι.

city's laws condition even 'private life', through a true opinion which relates to justice in a city. In all these cases, law seems to be the horizon, indeed the solution, whereby an individual can attain virtue.[32] The 'help of some god' Socrates refers to is the 'godsend' seen in book II, which guaranteed the identity of the appearance of justice in the city and in the individual. True, this 'godsend' did not imply, at first, a structural identity between city and soul, leading to the analogy, but the analogy is the source of political metaphors which interweave psychology and politics. These political metaphors are both the expression of the way in which law stands for reason in the citizen's soul, as well as a means to persuade citizens that they should obey civic law. The necessity to refer to laws as the right opinion, and the persuasive dimension of these metaphors makes it clear that they are not intended for philosophers whose virtue is not mediated by any other opinion, but is the result of knowledge itself. Political metaphors are used to give "demotic virtues", and not philosophical virtues, a stronger basis, using law as a substitute for reason.

3 When Law Stands for Reason

Political images of the soul do not only occur within the framework of the city-soul analogy in the *Republic*; in the *Timaeus* and in the *Laws* we find several comparisons and metaphors between individual characters, the structure and parts of the soul, and the organization of a city-state in all respects (its geography, military constructions, political institutions, etc.). It may be dangerous to compare several dialogues in their respective use of the political images of the soul, for each dialogue pursues a distinct dialectical path; but it shows, in spite of everything, how Plato wished to 'politicize' his psychology, i.e. as an instrument to account for the behavior of individuals in flawed institutions and a tool to promote an adequate education for citizens, even more so in the case of non-philosophers.

In book I of the *Laws*, the Athenian explicitly identifies, or rather substitutes, law and reason. What was only analogous in the *Republic* is, in the *Laws*,

32 Kamtekar (1998) has shown how we might accept that the virtues of the auxiliaries are 'imperfect' in the sense that they only rely on true opinion and are lacking 'counterfactual reliability'. Whereas Kamtekar stresses the epistemic grounds of this 'imperfect virtue', I wish to stress the importance of politics in the constitution of these true opinions. Bobonich (2002) 42–45 remains unclear on the possibility for other classes to possess an imperfect form of virtue, but the possibility is open in the *Laws* (288–292).

interchangeable.[33] Comparing the human soul to a puppet in book I, the Athenian puts forth a political metaphor:

> —But that he possesses within himself a pair of witless and mutually antagonistic advisers, which we call pleasure and pain?
> —That is so.
> —In addition to these two, he has opinions about the future, whose general name is 'expectations'. Specifically, the anticipation of pain is called 'fear', and the anticipation of the opposite is called 'confidence'. Over and against all these we have 'calculation', by which we judge the relative merits of pleasure and pain, and when this is expressed as a public decision of a state, it receives the title 'law'.[34]
>
> *Leg.* I, 644c6–d3

Psychic conflict receives a political treatment: pleasure and pain are 'advisers' (*sumboulos*), whereas public law (*nomos*) stands for calculation (*logismos*), when it is publicly stated. This law can either be knowledge or true opinion; it aims at helping the individual to judge and act virtuously when reason is eventually lacking or is too weak. The metaphor gives way to a mere substitution, insofar as prescriptions and interdictions are supposed to act directly on human affections, by providing the force that reason precisely lacks:

> This cord, which is golden and holy, transmits the power of 'calculation', a power which in a state is called the public law (…) The force exerted by law is excellent, and one should always co-operate with it, because although 'calculation' is a noble thing, it is gentle, not violent, and its efforts need assistants, so that the gold in us may prevail over the other substances.[35]
>
> *Leg.* I, 644e6–645b1

33 Saunders (1962) has shown that even if the city-soul analogy is not explicitly stated in the *Laws*, it is not abandoned, and many parallels can be drawn between psychic dispositions and classes in the city of Magnesia. See esp. p. 42 *sq*.

34 {ΑΘ.} Δύο δὲ κεκτημένον ἐν αὑτῷ συμβούλω ἐναντίω τε καὶ ἄφρονε, ὣ προσαγορεύομεν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην; {ΚΛ.} Ἔστι ταῦτα. {ΑΘ.} Πρὸς δὲ τούτοιν ἀμφοῖν αὖ δόξας μελλόντων, οἷν κοινὸν μὲν ὄνομα ἐλπίς, ἴδιον δέ, φόβος μὲν ἡ πρὸ λύπης ἐλπίς, θάρρος δὲ ἡ πρὸ τοῦ ἐναντίου· ἐπὶ δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις λογισμὸς ὅτι ποτ' αὐτῶν ἄμεινον ἢ χεῖρον, ὃς γενόμενος δόγμα πόλεως κοινὸν νόμος ἐπωνόμασται.

35 ταύτην δ' εἶναι τὴν τοῦ λογισμοῦ ἀγωγὴν χρυσῆν καὶ ἱεράν, τῆς πόλεως κοινὸν νόμον ἐπικαλουμένην, ἄλλας δὲ σκληρὰς καὶ σιδηρᾶς, τὴν δὲ μαλακὴν ἅτε χρυσῆν οὖσαν, τὰς δὲ ἄλλας παντοδαποῖς εἴδεσιν ὁμοίας. δεῖν δὴ τῇ καλλίστῃ ἀγωγῇ τῇ τοῦ νόμου ἀεὶ συλλαμβάνειν· ἅτε γὰρ τοῦ λογισμοῦ

Unsurprisingly, the Athenian makes this political metaphor of the soul a possible explanation to the expression we have already seen in the *Republic*, 'to be better than oneself': "the meaning of the terms 'self-superior' and 'self-inferior' will somehow become clearer, and the duties of state and individual will be better appreciated" (*Leg.* I, 645b2–5). The self-superior individual is the one whose soul is governed by reason and/or by law. Of course, in the latter case, reasoning is heteronomous and comes from an internalized norm which laws express. If his behavior is not unconditionally virtuous, because he lacks knowledge, he presents sufficiently virtuous dispositions. Law pervades every civic activity, from educational models in preliminary training, to games, rituals, institutions like syssitia, choral practices, etc. It helps reason to subdue human affections by making them compatible with true opinion.[36]

I now turn to the *Timaeus*. From 69c, the physician explains, by use of political metaphors,[37] how the moral parts of the soul are located in the body by daemons.

> In the face of these disturbances they scrupled to stain the divine soul only to the extent that this was absolutely necessary, and so they provided a home for the mortal soul in another place in the body, away from the other, once they had built an isthmus as boundary between the head and the chest by situating a neck between them to keep them apart. Inside the chest, then, and in what is called the trunk they proceeded to enclose the mortal type of soul. And since one part of the mortal soul was naturally superior to the other, they built the hollow of the trunk in sections, dividing them the way that women's quarters are divided from men's. They situated the midriff between the sections to serve as a partition.[38]
>
> *Tim.* 69c5–70a2, trad. D. ZEYL, slightly modified

καλοῦ μὲν ὄντος, πρᾴου δὲ καὶ οὐ βιαίου, δεῖσθαι ὑπηρετῶν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγωγήν, ὅπως ἂν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ χρυσοῦν γένος νικᾷ τὰ ἄλλα γένη.

36 On the significance of the educational program in the *Laws*, see Kamtekar (2010) on physical training and Renaut (2014) 300 *sq.* on the manipulation of emotions towards virtue.

37 On the various fields of reference used by Plato in his metaphors, see Pender (2000).

38 καὶ διὰ ταῦτα δὴ σεβόμενοι μιαίνειν τὸ θεῖον, ὅτι μὴ πᾶσα ἦν ἀνάγκη, χωρὶς ἐκείνου κατοικίζουσιν εἰς ἄλλην τοῦ σώματος οἴκησιν τὸ θνητόν, ἰσθμὸν καὶ ὅρον διοικοδομήσαντες τῆς τε κεφαλῆς καὶ τοῦ στήθους, αὐχένα μεταξὺ τιθέντες, ἵν' εἴη χωρίς. ἐν δὴ τοῖς στήθεσιν καὶ τῷ καλουμένῳ θώρακι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς θνητὸν γένος ἐνέδουν. καὶ ἐπειδὴ τὸ μὲν ἄμεινον αὐτῆς, τὸ δὲ χεῖρον ἐπεφύκει,

In the first instance, the vocabulary Plato uses to locate the soul in the body is much more topological and political in nature: *prosoikodomeô, katoikizô, diokodomeô* are words that convey not spatial location but rather a political image of the administration of an *oikos*, an estate, whether public or private. The metaphor of the 'isthmus' and the 'boundary' (*horon*) also conveys a political image of the body. The geopolitical separation is complemented by a domestic, though political, function: the separation of men and women. Timaeus then explains why the *thumos* should be close to the head, introducing a new metaphor:

> Now the part of the mortal soul that exhibits manliness and spirit, the ambitious part, they settled nearer the head, between the midriff and the neck, so that it might listen to reason and together with it restrain by force the part consisting of appetites, should the latter at any time refuse outright to obey the dictates of reason coming down from the citadel.[39]
>
> *Tim.* 70a2–7

An urbanistic metaphor, which refers to the political organization of the city in the *Republic*, compares reason with law,[40] with the ruling class occupying the Acropolis while the auxiliaries are based near the city walls, protecting the city from the outside by force, and from the inside by law and public order. This hierarchical metaphor is not exclusive with another urbanistic metaphor in the *Laws*, which explains why *thumos* is intermediary:

> We can see that it is not universally true that one district extends right up to the boundary of another. In some cases there is a no man's land in between, which will extend so as to touch either boundary and occupy an intermediate position between the two. This, we said, was true of an act done in anger: it falls somewhere between voluntary and involuntary.[41]
>
> *Leg.* IX, 878b4–8, trans. T.J. SAUNDERS

διοικοδομοῦσι τοῦ θώρακος αὖ τὸ κύτος, διορίζοντες οἷον γυναικῶν, τὴν δὲ ἀνδρῶν χωρὶς οἴκησιν, τὰς φρένας διάφραγμα εἰς τὸ μέσον αὐτῶν τιθέντες.

39 τὸ μετέχον οὖν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνδρείας καὶ θυμοῦ, φιλόνικον ὄν, κατῴκισαν ἐγγυτέρω τῆς κεφαλῆς μεταξὺ τῶν φρενῶν τε καὶ αὐχένος, ἵνα τοῦ λόγου κατήκοον ὂν κοινῇ μετ' ἐκείνου βίᾳ τὸ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν κατέχοι γένος, ὁπότ' ἐκ τῆς ἀκροπόλεως τῷ τ' ἐπιτάγματι καὶ λόγῳ μηδαμῇ πείθεσθαι ἑκὸν ἐθέλοι.

40 Taylor (1928) 500, claims that Timaeus is referring to the urbanistic organization of Syracuse.

41 Ἔστιν δὲ οὐ πάντων, ὡς ἔοικε, τῶν ὄντων ὅρος ὅρῳ προσμειγνύς, ἀλλ' οἷς ἔστιν μεθόριον, τοῦτο ἐν

This passage concludes a long discussion on the way a judge should apply penal categories in considering cases involving murder or injury, being aware that these categories are too broad for a crime which is, strictly speaking, never committed willingly.[42] What is translated as a 'no man's land' (*methorion*) is naturally associated with intermediary (*metaxu*). This metaphor is not the least bit accidental: *thumos* appears to be an undefined 'zone' between reason and law on the one hand, and desire and civic disorder on the other; its command or its lack of control in a given individual is the criterion the judges must take into account in deciding whether the criminal should be accepted as a member of the city or not.[43]

In the *Timaeus* and in the *Laws*, the metaphor aims at shaping a political organized body and soul, continuing the city-soul analogy of the *Republic* in other ways.[44] The parts of the soul are like the spaces politics invests in, just as it invests in the body. The plasticity of the metaphors allows the legislator some room to educate these souls, to divide them into 'parts' or 'places', with a view to mirroring the order of his city. This is why, as a potential cause of the psychic diseases discussed at the end of the *Timaeus*, political institutions are mentioned as at least as important as physical causes (87a7–b9).[45] A soul, then, is always a political soul, insofar as it is tied to a political institution in which the soul acts and suffers.

μέσῳ ὅρων πρότερον ἑκατέρῳ προσβάλλον γίγνοιτ᾽ ἂν ἀμφοῖν μεταξύ· καὶ δὴ καὶ τῶν ἀκουσίων τε καὶ ἑκουσίων τὸ θυμῷ γιγνόμενον ἔφαμεν εἶναι τοιοῦτον.

42 On this problem, see Woozley (1972), esp. 312–313, as well as the reply in Saunders (1973).

43 I discuss this passage in Renaut (2014) 318–322.

44 Whatever constitution it may have, the city functions as a model for the body, even if the physician claims that the city should be organized on the model of the body, as Desclos (1996) 154 rightly reminds the reader: "La Cité doit être comme un corps, nous disent le *Timée* et le *Critias*, en oubliant de préciser que l'on a d'abord organisé le corps comme une cité, ce que confirme la configuration narrative de nos deux dialogues: le discours de Timée est comme enclavé entre les deux récits de Critias, leur ensemble étant de surcroît explicitement présenté comme la suite de la construction—dans et par la *République*—d'une Cité idéale."

45 This is why the scope of the tripartite soul remains, in the *Timaeus*, moral and political rather than physiological. See Stalley (1996) on the concept of penology as a "moralised medecine", and Macé (2010) on a Platonic understanding of social psychology of the psychic diseases.

Conclusion

Political images of the soul can be read as loose uses of analogies and comparisons whose logical links are concealed. But the fact that they are rhetorical devices does not mean that they have no effect, nor that they pursue no philosophical aim. On the contrary, these political images, and especially political metaphors of the soul, which try to substitute the power of law for an inconstant reason, could be read as a starting point for what the city-soul analogy tries to analyze. If the city-soul analogy fails in explaining the valid relations of inclusion between individuals and the city they belong to, then the political metaphors are, indeed, powerful devices for making the rule of law a reality in the city. Transferring the power of reason to the power of law is a task that political metaphors of the soul seem to fulfill for an audience of citizens that are not philosophers.

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The Ship of State and the Subordination of Socrates

A.G. Long

In this paper I consider Socrates' use of imagery in *Republic* VI (that is, the sixth book on the ten-book division)[1] and in particular the 'image', as it is called more than once, in which the city is compared to a ship. My question is not how the image itself should be interpreted so much as what Socrates' use of images shows about his level of understanding. In the central sections of the *Republic* Socrates describes philosophers whose knowledge surpasses his: the philosopher-kings and -queens, or, as I will call them, the philosopher-guards. They have advanced beyond Socrates not in the subjects from which he sometimes distances himself, such as cosmology, but in the ethical inquiries that Socrates has, we might have thought, made his own. This has even caused commentators to suggest that, from the perspective of the *Republic*, Socrates is not a philosopher at all.[2]

My central claim is as follows: although Socrates is at a lower level of understanding than that which philosopher-guards are required to attain, his use of images does not always *show* which level he has attained. The so-called 'Ship of State' is perhaps the clearest case of this. When Socrates compares the city to a ship, he is not trying to do something that philosopher-guards will do better, more accurately or more fully. On the contrary, he is doing something that they may be unable to do. By contrasting this passage with Socrates' discussion of goodness, I argue against a uniform interpretation of his uses of images. Although in the central books of the *Republic* Socrates often mentions Forms, his immediate aim is not always to understand Forms, and accordingly his uses of images should not always be explained in terms of incomplete knowledge of the Forms. The passages where Socrates uses images do not subordinate him again and again to the philosophers whose education he is describing.

1 For the alternative division see Sedley (2013), 70–74.

2 'Socrates is *not* a philosopher in the *Republic*'s sense, given his explicit disavowal of knowledge of the Form of the Good' (Vasiliou (2012), 12; the emphasis is in the original article). According to Keyt (2006), 198, 'Plato's concept of a philosopher has become so lofty that his chief spokesman no longer qualifies'. Compare Keyt (2006), 209: 'if the argument earlier in this paper is correct, Socrates is not a true philosopher'. (I should add that elsewhere Keyt distinguishes between two Platonic conceptions of philosophy; see Keyt (2006), 199.) For a more nuanced view see Morrison (2007), 239–240.

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I have presented the question as if it concerned the character Socrates. Some might say that it should be expressed as a question about *Plato*, who is after all the author of these images. The question then becomes the following: what do images such as the Sun and the Ship of State show about the level of Plato's understanding, or at least about Plato's view of his own understanding? For example, this is how Fine brings together images, Plato, and the levels of the Divided Line:

> It seems reasonable to suggest that although Socrates (in the Socratic dialogues and *Meno*) places himself at L2 [i.e. level two of the Line] in his moral reasoning, Plato in the *Republic* places himself at L3 [i.e. one level more advanced]. The *Republic* is peppered with images used self-consciously to illustrate something about Forms: the Sun, Line and Cave are cases in point. Similarly, Plato partially explains the nature of justice in the soul through the analogies of health and of justice in the city; he uses the analogy of the ship to illustrate the nature of democracy, and so on.[3]

Here Fine treats the text as evidence of the author's self-image, and some interpreters would insist that Plato may be holding more back than her approach assumes. One advantage of framing the question in terms of Socrates, not Plato, is that it avoids controversial assumptions about Plato's openness about himself in writing the dialogues. On the other hand, I will need to make an assumption about Plato's attentiveness to his character Socrates: I must assume that Plato did not put images into Socrates' mouth without considering their suitability for Socrates to utter and, in the fiction of the dialogue, invent. But this is merely to assume that Plato is a careful dramatist, and that assumption is much less controversial.

My principal reason for making Socrates central to the discussion is that I wish to contribute to discussions of the relationship between Socrates and the philosopher-guards. Socrates bears a strong resemblance to philosopher-guards and has not completed the education planned for them, but he is not merely an unfinished (and powerless) philosopher-guard. My most provocative claim—that philosopher-guards may be unable to do some of what Socrates does—is defended at the end of my paper. First I show a difficulty in locating

3 Fine (1999), 236. Fine takes this to show that the *Republic*—to use her words at (1999), 235—'uses sensibles as images of Forms', and so can be put at the second highest level, or L3. I will argue that not every image should be treated as an attempt to understand Forms.

Socrates, or, if one prefers to put it this way, the *Republic*, on the Divided Line. A full discussion of this question would need to consider Socrates' use of hypothesis as well,[4] but in the context of this collection I focus on Socrates' use of images. My objective in this first section is to introduce a contrast between geometers (who really are subordinated to philosopher-guards, in part because of their use of images) and Socrates. I then turn to the Ship of State, and finally to the contrast between Socrates and the philosopher-guards.

1 Socrates and the Geometers

In the Divided Line Socrates distinguishes between four levels of cognition. One of the differences between the most advanced or highest[5] level and the second highest concerns images: at the second highest level ('thought') the soul uses visible objects as images, whereas at the highest level ('intelligence') the soul no longer uses images and considers Forms exclusively (510b4, b7–8, e3, 511c1–2). But the two levels have something in common: at both levels the objective is to attain knowledge of *unchanging*, *intelligible* items. As Socrates puts it, those at the level of thought, such as students of geometry, pursue inquiry 'for the sake of the square itself or the diagonal itself', not for the sake of visible diagrams, and 'aim to see those items that one cannot see except with the mind' (510d7–8, 510e3–511a1). Geometers may speak of 'squaring' or 'adding', but in fact they are trying to understand what *always* is, and does not come to be or perish at specific times (527a1–b8).[6] We need not consider precisely how Plato regards the mathematical items studied at the lower of the two levels;[7] the key point is that these mathematical entities have enough in common with the items studied at the highest level to permit Socrates to attribute to inquirers at both levels one and the same objective, namely knowledge of unchanging intelligibles. According to the manuscripts,[8] Glaucon suggests that geometers

4 See Benson (2008).

5 Socrates' wording at 511d8 shows that the Line is vertical, not horizontal, but in much of the passage Socrates reserves the terms 'ascend', 'higher' and 'descend' for inquiry into hypotheses and the 'unhypothetical' (511a6, b8, d1). Line numbers are those in Burnet's Oxford Classical Text. Slings' edition has not made Burnet's redundant; see n. 42 below.

6 Burnyeat (2000), 39–40 uses Euclid to illustrate Socrates' comments on geometrical language.

7 For discussion see Burnyeat (2000), 34–37; Burnyeat (2012), 149 and 152.

8 Slings puts these words in parentheses in the recent Oxford Classical Text, and argues for deletion at (2005), 114–119. The wording is extremely compressed, but that is not a strong argument for deletion. Glaucon is after all summarizing what he thinks Socrates means.

study 'objects of intelligence with the principle' (511d2). Perhaps he has in mind 'intelligence' in the strong sense of the highest level of the Line, and means that the items studied by geometers can be apprehended at the highest level too, as long as they are considered together with the 'principle' neglected by geometers.

This sameness of objective is important. In the subordination of thought to intelligence the differences between them of course matter, but their having a shared objective is important too. If the objective of thought were something different—attaining knowledge of temporary and visible objects, such as geometrical diagrams—then progressing from thought to intelligence would be to change to a new objective, not (or at least not directly) to have more success in reaching one's original objective. It is because at both levels the inquirer is seeking knowledge of intelligibles that progressing from thought to intelligence is straightforwardly an improvement: in moving to the level of intelligence one continues to undertake inquiry with a view to knowing intelligibles, but now sets aside intermediaries, the visible images, and considers the intelligibles directly.[9] The fact that thought and intelligence have the same objective will also prove useful when Socrates presents mathematical studies as training for dialectical ethics: at the level of thought the student is already making it her priority to gain knowledge of intelligible items, and this should continue to be her priority when she tries to make sense of justice and goodness. Drawing these together, Socrates relies on the claim that mathematicians are trying to understand intelligibles *both* when he shows that mathematics should lead on to ethics (ethics construed as the study of certain Forms) *and* when he shows that ethics so construed is an improvement on mathematics.

The Greek noun for 'image' that is used of the visible objects employed by thought, as described in the Divided Line, is used also of the Ship of State and the analogy of the Cave (487e5, 488a1, 489a5, 489a10, 515a4, 517a8, 517d1).[10] Should we infer that Socrates is operating at the same level as geometers, especially when he uses these images? One reason for concern is that the phrase 'visible image' is at risk of becoming too vague. When speaking of 'images' in the Divided Line passage Socrates has in mind diagrams that the geometer draws and then quite literally sees, whereas Socrates' own so-called 'images' are analogies and visual in other, looser senses: for example, it is not suggested that he actually draws the Divided Line for the brothers to see,

9 For the importance of *direct* attention see Lesher (2010), 182 and 184.

10 Pender comments well on Plato's uses of the term εἰκών. See Pender (2000), 40–43 and (2003), 55–56, 59–60.

and the Ship of State and the Cave have to be 'pictured', as we say, rather than literally seen, even though Socrates uses visual language, at least when describing the Cave (e.g. 'see people carrying implements along this wall …', 514b8–c1).

Moreover, there is the following difference between Socrates and the geometers. As we have just seen, when Socrates compares thought and intelligence it is important that they both have as their goal knowledge of unchanging and intelligible objects. Socrates suggests that geometers always work towards that goal, even though their own language often suggests otherwise. But Socrates' own discussion is more varied, even if we confine our attention to Books VI and VII. These books are not simply an attempt to understand Forms; the brothers give Socrates various challenges to overcome, some but not all of which (as we will see) relate directly to the nature of Forms. Whereas geometers consistently strive to understand Forms, or at least unchanging and intelligible objects, and can accordingly be compared with and ranked below those who study Forms directly, Socrates is not always aiming for understanding of Forms. Sometimes he is trying to understand conditions that, he hopes, will one day change.

Here it is all too easy to let our reading of Book VI be controlled by one famous, but unrepresentative, passage. During the discussion of goodness Socrates resists pressure from Glaucon and Adeimantus to explain what goodness is, and he instead compares the Form of the Good to the sun (yet another comparison described as an 'image' by Socrates, 509a9): both are objects of cognition (intelligence or vision), and both make the relevant kind of cognition possible in an entire realm or sphere. At this point Socrates and his interlocutors do indeed have the same goal as the philosopher-guards—understanding the Form of the Good—and Socrates fails to bring himself and the brothers all the way to that goal. But there is a particular reason why the interlocutors and the philosopher-guards come, in this passage, to have the same goal: it has been presented as uniquely attractive. Socrates has described knowledge of goodness as necessary if knowledge of other items is to be beneficial (505a6–b1). Moreover, understanding goodness is according to Socrates necessary if one is to understand justice (506a4–7)—the key point for him is to show that the guards of Callipolis must understand goodness, but he observes that 'nobody' will have an adequate understanding of justice without an understanding of goodness. It is at this point that Glaucon and Adeimantus start to press Socrates for his own account of goodness; as it is, they have to make do with an image instead. But this is not typical: it is not the case that whenever the discussion makes reference to a Form, the brothers demand immediately to receive an account of that Form. Nor, when Socrates discusses the education of the future

philosopher-rulers, do the brothers constantly ask there and then to receive the education themselves. This happens only when Socrates mentions some uniquely valuable part of the curriculum—goodness or (in Book VII, 532d2–e3) dialectic. The discussion of goodness is dramatically effective precisely because there is something *unusual* in Glaucon asking to be treated as if he were a philosopher in Callipolis. Plato is dramatizing the powerful intellectual pull of goodness—once goodness and the value of knowing goodness come into view, the discussion is drawn temporarily in a new direction.

Socrates also makes it clear that he offers a comparison or image because of his own inability to explain what goodness is (506d6–e5).[11] So there is a secure basis in the text for connecting this use of an image to Socrates' level of understanding. But it is not certain that we should make the same connection, and draw the same conclusion about Socrates, in other passages where Socrates uses an image.

2 The Ship of State

Before discussing the Ship itself (I use capital letters whenever I refer to the image or to the passage containing it)[12] I must first outline the immediate context in *Republic* VI—that is, the objection of Adeimantus to which the nautical imagery responds. (Other kinds of context, such as the use of nautical imagery in previous political literature, are of course important, and I will touch on them in what follows.) Socrates has just tried to establish through dialectical argument that genuine philosophers will inevitably have or acquire characteristics that are desirable in guards and rulers, such as courage (486b3–4) and the proper attitude to money (485e3–5). Adeimantus objects (487b1–d5) that Socrates' arguments are dialectically invincible and yet unpersuasive. An interlocutor who plays by the rules of dialectic will inevitably find himself bound to endorse Socrates' conclusion, and yet he may remain quite unconvinced by the argument. Question-and-answer exchange has its own rules such that a skilled opponent can require one to concede defeat, by putting one in a position where *not* conceding defeat is tantamount to stopping playing the game, and it is precisely in a board game that Adeimantus finds his analogy (487b7–c3).[13] After

11 Ferrari (2010), 31, n. 43 lists Socrates' other professions of uncertainty or ignorance in the *Republic*.

12 For discussion of the Ship of State see also Morgan's paper in this volume.

13 As this collection is about imagery let me note a couple of parallels: Heraclitus B52 and *Laws* 903d3–e1. See also the comparison at *Statesman* 292e6–9.

this general remark on dialectical argument, Adeimantus turns to the character of philosophers and objects that Socrates' argument is outweighed in persuasiveness by the unpromising impression given by philosophers in contemporary cities: eccentric, villainous or at best useless.

According to Socrates, the challenge demands that his answer take the form of an analogy—or, to stick with the same translation, an 'image' (487e4–5). Why does Socrates say this? No doubt Plato already has in mind how he will rework some familiar political imagery,[14] but we must still consider whether he gives Socrates a plausible reason for shifting temporarily to an image—and specifically whether the reason has to do with Socrates' ignorance or incomplete progress as a philosopher. What Socrates says is that he has been thrown into a debate where *proof* is difficult (487e7–488a1). The Ship of State is surrounded by dialectical argument: Socrates has just tried to establish which characteristics philosophers will have or acquire, and after the Ship will try to establish—again, through question-and-answer argument—why philosophers are corrupted by contemporary society. So whereas Adeimantus begins his objection with a general remark against question-and-answer exchange, Socrates does not renounce that kind of exchange; before long he is using it again. Instead he must regard the specific subject of the Ship of State as particularly resistant to dialectical treatment—as he says, it is hard to offer a 'proof' in this area.

I take Socrates' point to be as follows. It is possible to prove how philosophers will develop if they are not corrupted, given that the successful pursuit of philosophy requires and encourages certain characteristics. (This is one of the parts of the *Republic* that is hardest for us to take seriously, and yet the argument seems to be offered in all seriousness.) And it is possible to prove how the philosophers who are corrupted get corrupted: the study of philosophers' proper development shows the characteristics that philosophers must have, and we can then consider how those characteristics make someone corruptible. But the way in which the philosopher *is perceived by others* resists this kind of treatment. In part this is because the perceivers are not all alike. In the discussion of the philosopher's development and corruption, Socrates is considering a specific character and its fate in society, but, when he turns to the question of how the philosopher is perceived by others in society, there is no single character that the perceivers all share, and from which their attitude to philosophers can be shown to follow. It is also—and this is what Socrates emphasizes in the Ship of State—because the political atmosphere makes a

14 For the Ship of State in previous literature see Brock (2013), 53–67 and n. 19 below.

lot of difference. Change the political atmosphere, and the attitude to philosophers will change with it. Indeed, Socrates must be counting on this if the ideal city he envisages is ever to become a reality. So, perceptions of the philosopher cannot be shown to follow from the nature of the philosopher, or from the nature of the perceiver, or even from the two taken together. Instead we need to examine the prevailing political circumstances.

Fortunately, the response to Adeimantus does not require a proof. Socrates does not need to show that philosophers must inevitably be regarded as useless or eccentric, and, as we have seen, given his proposals for Callipolis he does not *want* to show this. All that is required is that the combination of expertise and contempt be explained: how can it be that someone has expertise that would be beneficial to others and yet is treated with contempt by them? This must be made to look not necessary or inevitable but unsurprising, sufficiently unsurprising for the contempt no longer to constitute evidence against the beneficial character of the expertise. As Socrates says, 'teach the image to the man who is surprised that philosophers are not respected in cities, and try to persuade him that it would be far more surprising if they were respected' (489a8–b1).

The explanation offered in the image (487e7–489a2) is that there are others in society, especially in democratic societies, who look very much like the real experts and have an alternative view of what the expertise involves. They are far more numerous, vocal and prominent than the real expert, and so their view of the expertise prevails, making it difficult for real expertise and its benefits to be recognized. Socrates shows how this might happen on board a ship, and he believes that the analogues in the political sphere are so easy to recognize that the image can without further explanation remove surprise at how philosophers are treated (489a4–6).[15] On the ship the pseudo-experts are the clamorous sailors, who strive to dominate the 'ship-owner'[16] and get control of the ship, and who regard as a true expert someone who can help them take charge, whereas they describe as 'useless' those who are no good at getting people into power (488b3–d4). But the real expertise requires turning one's attention away from the ship-owner and even, at least temporarily, to look outside the ship altogether—consider the seasons, the stars and the winds (488d6–7). This last comment points to the non-political orientation of the

15 He returns to the nautical analogy at 551c2–11. See also *Statesman* 296e4–297a5, 297e8–299e10.

16 The ναύκληρος was sometimes a charterer. See Casson (1971), 315, n. 67. As for the 'steersman' or 'navigator', he was, to use the neat formulation in Keyt (2006), 192, 'captain, helmsman, and navigator all rolled into one'.

political expert. At first sight it is surprising that the real expert in navigation should spend much of his time looking outside the ship, and the sailors—who think about nothing but the ship and its contents—seem to be the ones truly engaged with navigation. That is after all how they talk. But in fact navigation does require one constantly to make reference to objects outside the ship, and similarly, Plato holds, the expert in politics must constantly make reference to non-political items, such as the Forms of Justice and Goodness.[17]

The description of the sailors thus shows how the real expert becomes hard to recognize. One surprising point about the sailors—surprising because there seems no need to say it in response to Adeimantus—is that they deny the teachability of navigation (488b4–8). This requires the sailors to deny that they were taught it themselves, which is in itself a strange thing for a pseudo-expert to say. Plato is here revealing his awareness that in politics there is more than one kind of pseudo-expert. Sophists, who claim not only that political expertise can be taught but that they are its teachers, are merely one kind. A second, distinct pseudo-expert is the democratic politician, who reacts strongly against overly intellectual conceptions of politics. Plato was well aware that these two should be kept apart and would resist being lumped together—see for example the hostility shown to sophists by Anytus (a member of the second group) in the *Meno* (91c1–5, 92a7–b8). Plato therefore needs to indicate which kind he has in mind when speaking of the sailors. Socrates will go on to suggest that the sophists do not have the powerful influence that they are often supposed to have (492a5–b3, 493a6–9); it is rather the sophists who are influenced by ordinary people. Given that Socrates will belittle the sophists' influence on society, he can hardly be made to suggest that they are responsible for the way in which philosophers are perceived. Accordingly Plato makes it quite clear that the sailors stand for the second kind, who actually stand a chance of influencing people's opinions, namely democratic politicians like Anytus,[18] who, as Plato's readers know, can turn nasty in their opposition to sophists (the sailors are ready to 'cut to pieces' someone who says that navigation is teachable, 488b8) and end up harming those, like Socrates, who bear a superficial resemblance to sophists. And the image gains in persuasiveness by being unambiguous about exactly who is to blame for contemptuous attitudes to philosophers—those who do not flaunt their intellectual credentials, and even play down their intellectual credentials, but nonetheless shape popular

17 See Long 2013a.

18 Compare Schofield (2006), 123; Sedley (2007), 261; Brock (2013), 58. Benson (2008), 100 mentions Anytus specifically.

perceptions of what an expert in politics is like. That is to say, democratic politicians, not sophists. The interpretation is confirmed at 489c4–5, where Socrates identifies the sailors as those currently in charge of cities.

This leaves us with the owner. Here the nautical analogy proves remarkably congenial to Plato in what it suggests about wealth and ownership of property. As Roger Brock has recently confirmed in his fine survey,[19] the ship in the analogy was conceived of not as a trireme or warship but a merchantman. The struggle for control of the ship is thus a struggle for wealth or cargo as well as for power; as Socrates says, if the sailors get control they help themselves to the cargo (488c6).[20] Who should really own the ship and its cargo? Certainly not the sailors, but not the expert navigator either, despite his expertise—he can expect to be paid a wage for his services,[21] but not to become owner of the whole ship and its contents. Instead the owner should retain ownership, even though he is not an expert in navigation (488b1–3) and should let someone who really is an expert run and steer the ship. Traditional navigation thus provides a firm distinction between *ownership of property* on the one hand and *direction and control* on the other, with expertise associated only with the latter.[22] This distinction is properly observed in Callipolis, where the guards have extensive control but minimal private ownership, restricted only to what is unavoidable (416d3–6, 464b8–c1). The parallel between Callipolis and the ship is all the stronger if, as in the mainstream interpretation that I find most plausible, the 'owner' stands for the ordinary people not interested in leadership.[23] In

19 Brock (2013), 60. See also Keyt (2006), 191 and 210.

20 In the subsequent account of democracy, politicians are said to extract money from the rich; the politicians then give some money to the people but keep most of it for themselves (564e4–565a8). At this point Socrates distinguishes between the *people* and the *rich*, whereas in the Ship of State the two groups are not represented separately. In Theognis' version of the Ship of State (667–682; compare 855–856) the distribution of wealth is already a theme: 'there is no longer an equitable division [of possessions], in the common interest' (678). I quote from the translation of Theognis in Nagy (1985), 23. For the question of Theognis' authorship see Nagy (1985), 22, n. 1, 33–34 and 46–51. Figueira (1985), 149–150 discusses the meaning of 'equitable division'.

21 Compare the guards, who receive basic subsistence as their wage (416d7–e3, 420a2–7, 463b3, 464c1–3, 543c1–2).

22 I set aside the unusual cases in which the owner served as steersman. See Casson (1971), 315–316.

23 See Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1406b35–36; in the scholarship see Keyt (2006), 193–194; Schofield (2006), 53; Benson (2008), 100; Brock (2013), 58. The owner's poor hearing (488b1) has to be a reference to the description of the Athenian people or *dêmos* in Aristophanes *Knights* (40–43). Both passages use the Greek ὑπόκωφος, although Aristophanes' *Dêmos*

Callipolis these ordinary people—the *dêmos*, as they are still called (463a10–b2)—will be the richest citizens,[24] far richer than the expert elite who run the city. In Callipolis ownership stays with the 'owner'.

Notice that the explanation of the image has nothing at all to do with Socrates' limited knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of Forms. Forms of course have a counterpart in the image, namely the extra-nautical stars to which the expert refers in order to guide the ship.[25] But the image is not motivated by a need to be vague or figurative about Forms. It is motivated rather by the need to show how a combination of expertise and disregard or contempt is, in certain circumstances, unsurprising. Contrast the geometers we met near the start of the paper, who in their use of images are trying to understand intelligible, unchanging entities and thus should welcome an alternative to geometry that would allow them to examine intelligible objects directly. Socrates, by contrast, is (at least in this passage) not trying to understand an intelligible, unchanging object; he is trying to explain why, as things stand, philosophers do not get more respect. This basic contrast between Socrates and geometers is lost if we strive to locate the entire discussion on the Divided Line and particularly if, on the strength of Socrates' use of images, we place Socrates at the same level as the geometer. That can be achieved only by representing the subject matter of the Ship as closer to a Form than it really is.[26]

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says he is more intelligent than he appears (*Knights* 1121–1150). Why does Plato mention poor hearing *before* ignorance of navigation (488b2–3), if not to make the allusion to Aristophanes more obvious? Hunter (2012), 73–76 explores further connections between Aristophanes and Plato's imagery.

Reeve (2007) is a vigorous challenge to the mainstream interpretation, but overlooks the important distinction between ownership and control. Reeve (2007), 187 objects that if the owner were the people, then the ship would be 'in deep trouble' even before the owner is drugged and controlled by the sailors. This is not true: the ship would have an ignorant *owner* but not necessarily an ignorant *steersman* or *ruler*. Nor is the philosopher-guard a combination of steersman and owner, as Reeve (2007), 191 argues. Just how much of the city will the guards own?

24 All the same, artisans will not be allowed to become too rich (421d1–422a3), and the city as a whole will be poorer than other cities (422a4–7, 422e2). Schofield (2006), 280, n. 50 shows that there will be 'more simplicity in the economic class as well as in the lifestyle of the guards'.

25 See Keyt (2006), 197; Sedley (2007), 261.

26 See 'nature of democracy' in the quotation from Fine (1999) 3, in p. 159, note 3 above. Benson (2008), 101 and 105 suggests that the Ship distinguishes 'the nature of philosophy' from 'contingent' circumstances; compare 'nature or being (*ousia*) of philosophy' at Benson (2010), 202. Here too it seems to me that 'nature', let alone 'being', takes the Ship too far

I have argued that the discussion of goodness, where the interlocutors want to understand an intelligible object and where the use of an image does indeed mark Socrates' limitations, should not control our interpretation of this other image, the Ship of State. One further contrast between them is as follows: in the discussion of goodness, there is a real danger in relying on the comparison of goodness to the sun. Given that Socrates does not have full knowledge of goodness, he may be blind to the disanalogies between the sun and goodness. (How could he search for the disanalogies without independent knowledge of goodness?)[27] But he and his interlocutors are all thoroughly familiar with democratic politics, and their knowledge of democracy (if knowledge is possible in this sphere)[28] does not depend on the comparison of the city to a ship. So they can easily test the nautical analogy and ensure that it is similar in the relevant respects: that is, they can check whether in a democracy there really are vocal pseudo-experts who dominate people's perception of political expertise. In this case intellectual honesty does not demand the tentativeness that is necessary in the discussion of goodness.

We might then wonder how this contrast applies to the even more famous image of the Cave, which is *both* about politics, ideal and current, *and* about the Forms.[29] Here of course Plato is not placing himself in a tradition of political imagery—and there may be a contrast with the Ship of State, and some literary self-awareness on Plato's part, when Glaucon says that the Cave is 'an unusual image' (515a4): he means that we are not used to *this* way of representing the sphere of government and administration, whereas, as readers of Theognis[30] and other Greek poetry, we are familiar with nautical imagery in reflections

in the direction of Forms, and Benson (2008), 112, n. 56 actually contrasts the *Form* with 'contingent circumstances'. (Socrates mentions 'nature' at 489b6, but he is merely explaining why philosophers should not be expected to get the respect and attention of others; I return to this passage on p. 174 below.) What the Ship is primarily *about* is, if one wishes to use the term, the contingent: the lack of respect for philosophers in existing societies. (I should add that, unlike Fine, Benson (2010), 202 places the *Republic* at the highest level of the Line.)

27 Compare Woolf (2012), 164.

28 Here I have in mind the discussion at 475e6–480a13.

29 Ledbetter's chapter in this volume discusses the rhetorical power of the Cave.

30 See n. 20. As Brock (2013), 58 puts it, the Ship of State is 'self-consciously literary and rich in echoes of earlier authors'. Compare Hunter (2012), 79: 'the "Ship of State" is thus deeply veined with the heritage of classical literature; it is a kind of image with which we are familiar'. Lane Fox (2000), 46 discusses the range of poetry that was read in Athens under Theognis' name.

on politics.[31] If my contrast between the Sun and the Ship of State is accurate, then Socrates should be more tentative at some points of the Cave than at others. When describing the life of the prisoners down in the Cave, Socrates need not be tentative. He can be quite confident in suggesting that most people are unreflective and not sufficiently independent when they consider justice in the law courts (his example of the lowest level of the cave, 517d4–e2). After all, Socrates' understanding of this point is not reliant on analogies—he could describe in literal terms the intellectual deficiencies of his fellow Athenians, and spends some of his own time in court doing just that (see e.g. *Apology* 22d6–8).[32] But Socrates should be more tentative when describing the relationship between the Form of the Good and other intelligible objects. For some textual support for this distinction, notice that it is when moving to the intelligible realm that Socrates expresses doubt: 'god knows whether my hope is true' (517b6–7). *Within one image* we find some variety: at some points Socrates' understanding is dependent on analogies, and so is precarious, whereas at other points it is not so dependent. If so, then a uniform way of connecting the use of images to Socrates' level of understanding is all the more inappropriate.

3 Founders, Guards and Persuasion

I have argued that Socrates' uses of images should not all be explained in terms of limited or partial understanding. I end by considering the differences between Socrates and the philosopher-guards. Scholars have usually considered Socrates and the guards as representatives of two kinds of philosopher, partly proficient and fully proficient.[33] This is hardly surprising. The descrip-

31 My point concerns political imagery specifically. For Plato's appropriation of the Homeric underworld see Ledbetter's paper in this volume. Roger Brock has helpfully drawn my attention to the association of 'up' with leadership (see Brock (2013), xviii n. 13), but in Plato's image the most 'elevated' people are not actively exercising political authority.

32 This is not to deny that understanding, even at this lower level, would be deepened by knowledge of Forms. See 520c3–6. What Socrates apparently has in mind above all is that with knowledge of the relevant Forms one would understand (in a defective city) how the impressions of justice given in forensic oratory fall short of true justice, and (in the good city) how cultural representations of just people and just behaviour are accurate.

33 This assumes that Socrates really is a philosopher, and even that is not uncontroversial. See n. 2. above.

tion of the philosopher encountering hostility and contempt—both in the Ship of State (488e3–489a2) and in the Cave (516e8–517a6)—is extremely reminiscent of Socrates, and Socrates is one example of the philosopher uncorrupted by society, although he says that he has been protected for such an unusual reason (the *daimonion*) that he is not worth discussing (496c3–5).

As long as we compare Socrates and the philosopher-guards in terms of philosophical understanding, Socrates will inevitably be subordinated. But this is not the only contrast suggested in the text. As Melissa Lane has recently shown,[34] there is also a contrast between their *political* roles. Socrates and the brothers found the city, frame its laws, and then entrust it to the philosopher-guards, who will rule and protect it. Of course, the city is 'established' merely in discourse, as Socrates says (see e.g. 592a10–b1).[35] All the same, the conceit of Socrates the lawgiver is extremely useful for the political sections of the *Republic*, as it allows Plato to distinguish between the contributions of (i) founders/lawgivers and (ii) guards/rulers, and so to clarify which tasks belong to either group. When Plato distinguishes between lawgivers and rulers, he may have in mind the traditions according to which a pioneering lawgiver, after completing his legislation, distanced himself from his city and left it to others to run. Such stories were circulated about both Solon's Athenian legislation and Lycurgus' legislation in Sparta.[36] In observing the distinction between lawgivers and rulers, the *Republic* is more traditional than Plato's later political writing; the *Statesman* and *Laws* consider how much has to change if there is no longer so sharp a distinction between legislation and ruling, either if the ruler is not restricted by pre-existing laws (as in the *Statesman*), or if the legislation is so full an expression of rationality that special expertise on the rulers' part is less essential (as in the *Laws*).[37]

Let us return to the *Republic*. If the contrast is between founders or lawgivers on the one hand and rulers on the other, it is not certain that it must be an unequal relationship, nor is it certain that the contrast between them *as philosophers* is always relevant. Some of Socrates' tasks as 'founder' are tasks for him rather than for the rulers, not because he lacks full philosophical understanding, but because, as founder, he needs to create institutions and laws

34 Lane (2013a). Socrates and the brothers are described as 'founders' at 378e7–379a1 and 519c8. Socrates talks like a legislator at 417b8 and 519e1–520a4, and calls the brothers legislators at 458c6 and 497d1.

35 There is a full list of references in Burnyeat (1999), 297, n. 1.

36 Solon: Herodotus 1.29; Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 11.1; Plutarch *Solon* 25.4–5. Lycurgus: Plutarch *Lycurgus* 29.1–4. See Nagy (1985), 31–32; Lane (2013b), 67.

37 I owe this idea to Lane (2013a), 112.

rather than maintain or protect them. Similarly, the discrimination in imposing restrictions may have nothing to do with different levels of philosophical understanding. If it is assumed that the founders will not continue to live in Callipolis, then there is no need to place restrictions on their property, or to ensure that they do not acquire a dangerous attitude to citizens, but it may nonetheless be crucial to restrict the *rulers* in these ways, purely because the rulers will still live in the city and will be in a position to take advantage of the other citizens.

One crucial political objective is getting people to agree about who should be in charge. This is what it means to achieve 'moderation' in the political sphere (431d9–432a9). To whom does it fall to make a persuasive case for rule by philosopher-guards? Within the ideal city the main instrument of persuasion is the Noble Lie, which the philosopher-guards above all others must *believe* (414c1–2, 414d2–3). Here again the distinction between rulers and founders is extremely useful to Plato: given that the rulers must be deceived, they cannot themselves compose the Noble Lie, but the founders (Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus) do not need to be deceived and so are not prevented from being its authors. This contrast between founders and rulers has, once again, nothing to do with their levels of proficiency as philosophers. The rulers will have ample opportunity to inflict harm on the other citizens and to let harm befall the city, and so the rulers need to be given, through deception, the attitudes to fellow-citizens and to the city that will prevent this: they must regard the fellow-citizens as their siblings, related through shared autochthony, and the city's territory as their mother (414e3–6). The (presumably absent) founders, on the other hand, will not be able to harm the citizens, and so they do not need to be deceived and can knowingly write the Lie. The reason to entrust the job of persuasion to the founders is thoroughly political and, we might say, Solonic—there will be no need to worry about the founders when their work is over. But it is already striking that Plato has not connected political persuasion to the *rulers*' expertise.

If we consider persuasion *outside* the ideal city, then we must speak of 'fully educated philosophers', rather than 'philosopher-guards' (as yet they have no city to rule and guard). Socrates shows no confidence that philosophers, even of advanced understanding, can persuade others to let them rule, and his suggestion that in current cities philosophers should keep a low profile (496d5–e2) would make little sense if he were confident. Far from publicizing what he has to offer, the philosopher should wait until he 'gets' a suitable city (497a3), and the Greek (τυχών) does not suggest that there is anything the philosophers can do to make that day come sooner. When Socrates discusses how philosophers might come to power, he does not suggest that they could persuade others—

rather, 'a necessity from chance' might force the philosophers' hand (499b5),[38] or alternatively those currently in power, or their sons, may become philosophers (499b6–c2). (Presumably a philosophical daughter would be just as good, were it not for the fact that, in existing constitutions, a daughter will not inherit power.) The true political *experts* are philosophers, but the combination of philosophy and political *power* depends on a coincidence; philosophical expertise does not have a political application until the philosopher already has the power to change and maintain the city.[39]

Here the Ship of State contains some important evidence. In this image Socrates contrasts the real expert with the sailors, and it is the *sailors* who take navigational expertise (that is, expertise in ruling) to consist in the ability to 'persuade or force' the owner to put one in charge (488d1–4). As we have seen, when Socrates outlines what the real expertise involves, he mentions not persuasiveness on board the ship but understanding objects that are outside, and independent of, the ship (488d5–7). The text in what follows (488d8–e3) is unfortunately uncertain. Socrates is describing the sailors.

> They do not know that the real steersman must, if he is to be truly fit to rule the ship, concern himself with the time of year, the seasons, the sky, the stars, the winds, and everything that belongs to his art, and they believe [or 'he believes'] that it is impossible to acquire simultaneously (i) the *steersman's art* and (ii) the art, or practice, of *becoming the steersman* (whether others want one to or not).[40]

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38 In the Greek text printed by Burnet (and Adam (1920–1921)), this same chance necessity forces the city to become obedient (499b6). The manuscripts state that it is rather the philosophers who become obedient to the city. With this passage compare 592a7–9, where 'chance' is again mentioned.

39 It is important not to project onto the *Republic* the claims made in the *Phaedrus* about the connection between philosophy and expertise in rhetoric; rhetoric forms no part of the philosopher-guards' education, and it is not suggested that their education in philosophy will confer on them superior ability to persuade others.

40 … τοῦ δὲ ἀληθινοῦ κυβερνήτου πέρι μηδ' ἐπαΐοντες, ὅτι ἀνάγκη αὐτῷ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ποιεῖσθαι ἐνιαυτοῦ καὶ ὡρῶν καὶ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἄστρων καὶ πνευμάτων καὶ πάντων τῶν τῇ τέχνῃ προσηκόντων, εἰ μέλλει τῷ ὄντι νεὼς ἀρχικὸς ἔσεσθαι, ὅπως δὲ κυβερνήσει ἐάντε τινες βούλωνται ἐάντε μή, μήτε τέχνην τούτου μήτε μελέτην **οἰόμενοι** [Sidgwick: **οἰομένῳ**] δυνατὸν εἶναι λαβεῖν ἅμα καὶ τὴν κυβερνητικήν. With ὅπως κυβερνήσει compare ὃς ἂν συλλαμβάνειν δεινὸς ᾖ ὅπως ἄρξουσιν, 'who is clever at helping them become the rulers' (488d2–3). Sidgwick (1874), 275 rightly notes the parallel.

Socrates mentions a belief (B) that it is impossible to learn simultaneously expertise in navigation and the art, if it deserves to be called an art,[41] of becoming the navigator or steersman, with or without people's consent. B takes these two 'arts' to be distinct and separately acquired. The mention of consent recalls the sailors' conception of the expertise (getting control through persuasion or force), and in the manuscripts belief B is attributed to the sailors. But this is impossible, as the sailors believe that expertise in navigation is precisely knowing how to become, or make someone else, the steersman. As Sidgwick saw, the text needs to be emended, and Sidgwick's own elegant solution is to attribute B to the real expert.[42] On this emendation, the expert recognizes the distinction between (i) what he knows and (ii) the techniques of persuasion and coercion valued by the sailors.

After the Ship of State Socrates accepts, with a qualification, one part of Adeimantus' challenge. Adeimantus objects that philosophers appear useless, and Socrates accepts that the best philosophers *are* useless—'to the many', or, in an alternative translation, 'to ordinary people' (489b3–4; compare 487d10). But, he adds, the philosophers must not be blamed for their uselessness, as it is not 'natural' for the steersman to ask the sailors to submit to his authority (489b4–7). Plato could hardly have written these lines if he had thought that philosophy equipped one to make a persuasive case for rule by philosophers—if he had believed that, the philosopher would be extremely useful, even to an unreformed, 'ordinary' audience. As it is, showing persuasively how beneficial it would be to be ruled by a philosopher does not belong to philosophy itself. In the analogy, the steersman can, when put in charge of the ship, steer and organize it, but it does not belong to his navigational art to put himself in charge of the ship, whether through persuasion or through force.

From this it might sound as if the *Republic* is not interested in persuasion. On the contrary, it shows an intense interest in both moral and political persuasion. In Burnyeat's words, 'the *Republic* is first and foremost a work of political persuasion',[43] and on the moral side we can add that the reason why the dis-

41 Notice that the sailors do not deny that navigation (as they conceive of it: persuading and coercing others to put them in charge) is or requires an art. What they deny is that it is instilled through *teaching* or, from the other perspective, *learning* (488b4–8). So the hesitation about τέχνη ('art, or practice') is not a reason to attribute B to the sailors. But we can easily see why the real expert, the philosopher, would hesitate to call persuasion and coercion a τέχνη.

42 Sidgwick (1874), 275. Slings (2005) does not discuss the passage, and Sidgwick's suggestion is not noted in Slings' Oxford Classical Text.

43 Burnyeat (2012), 165. Compare Burnyeat (1999), 308: 'the whole *Republic* is an exercise in

cussion continues after Book 1 is that Socrates has not *persuaded* the brothers that Thrasymachus is wrong about justice (357a4–b4). What the *Republic* lacks is a debate about *rhetoric*—that is, a debate about *rhêtorikê technê*, the 'art of rhetoric'. In this dialogue, unlike in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, Socrates does not consider whether there is, or could be, an *art* or *expertise* of persuasion.[44] But it is nonetheless of central importance that he and the brothers find a way of speaking persuasively about justice and the good city.

One group whom Socrates seeks to persuade are those hostile to rule by philosophers, whose views, or responses, are sometimes delivered by Glaucon and Adeimantus (473e6–474a4, 498c6–8, 499d8–e1, 501c9). This is the dialectical context of the Ship of State: according to Adeimantus, 'one might say' that philosophers are eccentric or useless (487c4–d5), but for his part he is not sure whether this is true (487d8–9). Adeimantus is told to use the Ship of State to 'persuade' the kind of objector whom he has represented (489a8–b1). Plato is trying to show not only the suitability of philosophers for government but the possibility of reconciling people, including even the 'many', to the rule of philosophers (498d6–499a9, 499d10–500b6, 500d10–e5, 501c4–502a4).[45] The relevance of this to Socrates' political proposals should be obvious. If it were *impossible* to persuade non-philosophers that philosophers should rule, then it would be impossible to bring about the 'moderate' city, in which all citizens agree who should rule (see, as before, 431d9–432a9).

It falls to Socrates to show how people could be persuaded. What enables him to speak persuasively about the desirability of rule by philosophers? More precisely, how is he able, by means of the Ship of State, to disarm an objection to rule by philosophers? It is not his being a philosopher, as that would imply the connection between philosophy and persuasiveness that is denied in the Ship of State and elsewhere. It is rather his habit of using images or analogies. Adeimantus points out facetiously (487e6) that it is not surprising to see Socrates using an image, and Socrates replies that he finds it hard to let go of images (488a1–2).[46] From this it sounds as if Socrates offers an image because of a psychological compulsion. But, as he says (488e4–5), the reply to Adeimantus' challenge *should* take the form of an image. It is natural to suppose that

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the art of persuasion'. 'Art' may mislead, at least if it puts us in mind of the technical status of persuasion.

44 But see n. 41 above. Plato may nonetheless show his awareness of the debate.

45 See Long (2013b), 97–98; Ferrari (2013), 136.

46 This is a nicely Socratic way of capping a previous jibe: to direct further criticism (or at least humour) at *himself*. Gonzalez comments well on the translation here (see n. 5 of his paper in this volume).

beneficial expertise is always easy to recognize, but the nautical parallel shows that this is wrong: some forms of expertise are not narrowly preoccupied with the object of their concern (the city or the ship), and such expertise is all the harder to recognize if other people are noisily publicizing a false conception of it. This does not show that philosophy actually is such an expertise, but that is not Socrates' central point: what Socrates has to show is that the lack of respect for philosophers is not in itself a good reason to withhold power from them. The Ship has to establish this negative point, and it is a mark of Plato's artistry that he also makes the image speak to debates about wealth and illustrate his conception of political expertise. In finding an analogy that makes this negative point persuasively Socrates succeeds where other philosophers may fail—even philosophers at a higher epistemic level than his.[47]

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Plato's Goat-Stags and the Uses of Comparison

Kathryn Morgan

1 Introduction

As is so often the case in the study of Plato, any analysis of literary technique will have philosophical implications. This is particularly so in the present instance: Plato's imagery is not only an important element of his rhetorical arsenal but poses multiple questions of epistemology, various aspects of which are explored in the current volume. My essay takes up a seemingly minor image from Book 6 of the *Republic*, where Socrates compares his procedure in explaining why philosophers seem useless in the contemporary city to a painter creating a goat-stag (*tragelaphos*). This image is often overlooked, given that it is merely a prelude to the more famous and complex "ship of state" analogy that follows. I argue that, when interpreted, Socrates' goat-stag image can present us with a deeper understanding of that strange and hybrid creature, the philosopher-king, and of Socrates' rhetorical and didactic strategies as he surmounts the "third wave" of paradox in *Republic* 6. I shall begin by reading the goat-stag carefully against its immediate context, then look beyond Plato to its appearance in Aristophanes' *Frogs* and the Aristotelian tradition. Finally the goat-stag will be interpreted as emblematic of the entire complex of images used in Book 6 to explore the problematic participation of the philosopher in the life of the city.

2 The Goat-Stag and the Philosopher-King

At *Republic* 6.487e Socrates is in the midst of the third of the great waves of paradox that structure the middle books of the dialogue. He has made the startling proposal that an ideal city can only be founded when philosophers become kings, but has been challenged by his interlocutor Adeimantus to explain why contemporary philosophers are either useless to the city or vicious. Socrates replies that he must speak in images:

> "You ask," I said, "a question that requires an answer formulated as an image."
>
> "And you," he said, "are not accustomed to speak in images!"
>
> "Well," I said, "you're mocking me after throwing me into an argument like this that's hard to demonstrate! Hear, then, my image, so that you

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> may see still better how greedily I construct images. For what the most capable experience with regard to cities is so difficult that there is not any other one thing like it, but I must bring it together from many sources, creating an image and making a defense on their behalf, like painters paint goat-stags and things like that by mixing. So imagine something like this happening either on many ships or on one: a ship-owner who in size and strength surpasses all on the ship …"[1]
>
> 487e-488a

He goes on to elaborate the ship of state analogy, about which several papers in this volume have much to say. This is a marked moment. We should note first the use of humor that draws attention to Socrates' passion for images and comparisons. Adeimantus' ironic amusement when Socrates declares his intention to use an imagistic comparison works because Socrates uses such comparisons all the time, and not only when he is in argumentative difficulty.[2] In several dialogues he has recourse to a craft analogy that helps him explore the nature of specialized knowledge, so that Callicles in the *Gorgias* can complain that Socrates never stops talking about cooks, cobblers, doctors, and so on (491a). Socrates' response to Adeimantus grants him his point in mock dismay and suggests that what follows will be a prime example of this Socratic tendency. He grants that what he will say will show how he constructs images "greedily" (*glischrôs*).[3]

Secondly we should notice that this is a second-order moment, one in which Socrates deploys an image to illustrate how he uses images. His comparison of himself to a painter who creates hybrid creatures like goat-stags is intended to

1 Ἐρωτᾷς, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἐρώτημα δεόμενον ἀποκρίσεως δι' εἰκόνος λεγομένης.
Σὺ δέ γε, ἔφη, οἶμαι οὐκ εἴωθας δι' εἰκόνων λέγειν.
Εἶεν, εἶπον· σκώπτεις ἐμβεβληκώς με εἰς λόγον οὕτω δυσαπόδεικτον; ἄκουε δ' οὖν τῆς εἰκόνος, ἵν' ἔτι μᾶλλον ἴδῃς ὡς γλίσχρως εἰκάζω. οὕτω γὰρ χαλεπὸν τὸ πάθος τῶν ἐπιεικεστάτων, ὃ πρὸς τὰς πόλεις πεπόνθασιν, ὥστε οὐδ' ἔστιν ἓν οὐδὲν ἄλλο τοιοῦτον πεπονθός, ἀλλὰ δεῖ ἐκ πολλῶν αὐτὸ συναγαγεῖν εἰκάζοντα καὶ ἀπολογούμενον ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, οἷον οἱ γραφῆς τραγελάφους καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα μειγνύντες γράφουσιν. νόησον γὰρ τοιουτονὶ γενόμενον εἴτε πολλῶν νεῶν πέρι εἴτε μιᾶς· ναύκληρον μεγέθει μὲν καὶ ῥώμῃ ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἐν τῇ νηὶ πάντας … Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

2 Cf. Gonzalez 1998: 131–132.

3 Adam (1902, vol. 2: 9) argues convincingly that the translation we should use for γλίσχρως is "greedily" rather than "sparingly," although the adverb seems to be able to mean both. The passage would, I think, still work even if we translated "sparingly." In that case, it would pick up on Adeimantus' ironic comment that Socrates, *of course*, is not used to making images. Socrates would reply: "Well, see how *sparingly* I make them now."

illustrate his procedure in explaining the experience of philosophers through images (an issue to which we shall shortly return). This complexity is humorous, but it is also emphatic at a methodological level. Socrates' discursive practice is characterized by image-making, image-making that brings together seemingly disparate elements and fuses them into one to create new possibilities. George Berg's 1903 dissertation on metaphor and comparison in Plato observed a growth in frequency as well as in elaboration after the briefer dialogues (usually considered early). "This development," he says, "reaches its climax in point of numerical proportion in the Phaedrus and the dialectic dialogues, and in quality, in the Republic."[4] It makes sense to imagine that we will find a greater use of complex imagery, particularly "didactic" imagery that helps to make an argument clearer, when Socrates is actually advancing ideas rather than when he is engaged in the cut and thrust of the elenchus. The *Republic*, because of its length, gives us an almost unparalleled opportunity to watch systems of imagery develop and transform, a project of which this paper is only an initial step.

The passage under consideration is programmatic both in its self-reflexivity and because it occurs at a moment when Adeimantus has been slyly chiding Socrates over his discursive technique. Socrates has been pursuing a detailed description of military policy in Kallipolis as part of his illustration of the benefits of philosopher-kingship. Adeimantus stops him by protesting that this is all very laudable but Socrates is up to his old tricks:

> Adeimantus said, "Nobody could contradict you about this, Socrates. But every time you say it, your listeners experience something like this: they think that because of their inexperience in question and answer they're led astray a little bit by the argument at each question, and when the little bits are collected together at the end of the conversation, a big fall is revealed, opposite to what they said at first. And just as in checkers[5] those who are inexperienced are in the end boxed in by those who are experienced and can't make a move, so they too are finally boxed in and have

4 Berg 1903: 14.

5 The word translated here as "checkers" is *petteia*, an ancient Greek board game. For the political implications of *petteia*, see Kurke 1999: 260–268. It is striking that one version of this game was called *polis*, and that in another version there may have been a possibility that one of the pieces could become a "king" piece (*basileus*). Adeimantus' deployment of this image is thus anything but casual. In the dialogic game of *petteia* played by the interlocutors, Socrates has attempted to win by deploying the "king" piece: an argument about philosopher-kings.

> nothing to say in this different sort of checkers, played not with pebbles but with words; since in fact what you say is no more true for all that. I say this with regard to the present."[6]
>
> *Rep.* 6.487b–c

Adeimantus' objection criticizes the elenctic technique which we see in the early dialogues and which causes such profound irritation among its victims. Socrates gets his interlocutors to make admission after admission until they are defeated at the end when all the little concessions add up. Notably, Adeimantus uses a simile to capture the precise nature of dialogic interaction with Socrates: it's like inexperienced players of checkers being trapped by experts. In the present case, he will suggest, the problem is that most people, looking at those who practice philosophy, see that they are either vicious cranks or, if decent, useless to the city. Isn't this a paradox? Not at all says, Socrates, and this is where the goat-stag and "ship of state" comparisons come in, intended to show that upright philosophers are useless to the city because the city will not use them. They are like the helmsman to whom it does not occur to anyone to defer.

The intellectual dynamics of this passage mirror the move in the corpus from simple question and answer to a more positive and fleshed-out presentation of Socrates' ideas. Adeimantus critiques the question and answer method by using the image of checkers, and asserting that Socrates' victims are "unable to speak in this other form of checkers played not with pebbles but with words" (487b–c). Socrates admits the paradox inherent in the idea of the philosophically expert politician and then turns to images himself to escape the difficulty. His exchange with Adeimantus is a culminating point in the broader structure of the *Republic*'s "three waves," where Socrates' attempts to take difficult points for granted are blocked by the insistence of those present that he stop and explain what he means in more detail.

Socrates and Adeimantus, then, pause to reflect on the progress of the argument and the terms on which it is conducted, and focus on the practice of image-making so emphatically that Socrates uses an image (the goat-stag)

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6 Καὶ ὁ Ἀδείμαντος, Ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔφη, πρὸς μὲν ταῦτά σοι οὐδεὶς ἂν οἷός τ' εἴη ἀντειπεῖν. ἀλλὰ γὰρ τοιόνδε τι πάσχουσιν οἱ ἀκούοντες ἑκάστοτε ἃ νῦν λέγεις· ἡγοῦνται δι' ἀπειρίαν τοῦ ἐρωτᾶν καὶ ἀποκρίνεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου παρ' ἕκαστον τὸ ἐρώτημα σμικρὸν παραγόμενοι, ἁθροισθέντων τῶν σμικρῶν ἐπὶ τελευτῆς τῶν λόγων μέγα τὸ σφάλμα καὶ ἐναντίον τοῖς πρώτοις ἀναφαίνεσθαι, καὶ ὥσπερ ὑπὸ τῶν πεττεύειν δεινῶν οἱ μὴ τελευτῶντες ἀποκλείονται καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὅτι φέρωσιν, οὕτω καὶ σφεῖς τελευτῶντες ἀποκλείεσθαι καὶ οὐκ ἔχειν ὅτι λέγωσιν ὑπὸ πεττείας αὖ ταύτης τινὸς ἑτέρας, οὐκ ἐν ψήφοις ἀλλ' ἐν λόγοις· ἐπεὶ τό γε ἀληθὲς οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον ταύτῃ ἔχειν. λέγω δ' εἰς τὸ παρὸν ἀποβλέψας.

to introduce an image (the ship of state). Why does Plato do this, and how do these two images relate to each other? He could, after all, have moved directly to the ship of state. Instead, however, he has Socrates expand on the difficulty of making images suitable for the current need. So complex is the experience of the best candidates for political rule "that there is not any other one thing like it, but I must bring it together from many sources, creating an image and making a defense on their behalf, like painters paint goat-stags and things like that by mixing." This introduction helps to stress the paradoxical situation in which the upright philosophers find themselves. It is *so* complex that Socrates must pull together material from many sources in order to explain it. Thus the use of the goat-stag, a weird and composite creature. So much seems clear, but how precisely are we to understand the nature of the complexity at issue here?

Previous attempts to understand the goat-stag have sought the solution to the conundrum by connecting the image with Platonic visions of the human soul. Thus C.D.C. Reeve sees the goat and the stag as opposing aspects of a human being, soul and body, and connects the image to the questions raised in the *Republic* over the happiness of philosopher-kings. A human is "an immortal stag temporarily animating the corpse of a goat;" because we are embodied souls, it does not make sense for anyone, even a philosopher, to think that he can escape the constraints of the body and the society it inhabits. The just philosopher will, therefore, rule.[7] Mark McPherran insists on reading the image "in the context of Plato's entire bestiary." He is thinking in particular of the image of the soul as it is presented in Book 9. Here Socrates has decided to construct an image of the soul in speech (*eikona plasantes tês psuchês logôi*), and decides that he will need to resources of mythology to do so:

> One of the sort of ancient natures that are said in myths to have existed: the Chimaera and Scylla and Cerberus, and many other creatures that are said to have been produced with many forms in one body.[8]
>
> *Rep.* 588c

One part of this composite creature will itself be composite: the appetitive part of the soul will be represented by a complex and many-headed beast,

7 Reeve 2006: 208–209.

8 Τῶν τοιούτων τινά, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, οἷαι μυθολογοῦνται παλαιαὶ γενέσθαι φύσεις, ἥ τε Χιμαίρας καὶ ἡ Σκύλλης καὶ Κερβέρου, καὶ ἄλλαι τινὲς συχναὶ λέγονται συμπεφυκυῖαι ἰδέαι πολλαὶ εἰς ἓν γενέσθαι.

one that has in a circle the heads of beasts both wild and tame and is capable of changing and growing all these out of itself. We are also to imagine a lion (representing the *thumos*) and a man (representing the rational part of the soul). These three beings are to be joined together into one, and the image of one of the parts, that of the man, will be set around the outside, so that an onlooker who could not see the inside would think it was one animal, a man (588c–e). The image here is clearly related to other multiform images for the human condition in Plato. We think of Typhon from the *Phaedrus* (230a), where Socrates wonders whether he is a complex and savage creature like Typhon, or Pan in the *Cratylus* (408c), where Pan represents speech, whose upper half is divine but whose goatish lower half is associated with myth and falsehood.[9] McPherran suggests that when we compare the goat-stag with the soul-beast of Book 9, we are meant to conclude that the goat-stag is lacking because it is incomplete: the goat stands for our appetites and the stag for our noble *thumos*; the rational part is missing, and the conception only becomes fully fledged when we move into the ship metaphor and meet the soul-beast in Book 9.[10]

Both these interpretations read the goat-stag in terms of parts of the soul, and this is certainly a tempting possibility. The next question is how this interpretation connects the goat stag with the following ship comparison, since on the face of it the goat-stag does not seem at all analogous to the following description of a ship governed by the ignorant. For Reeve, the ship simile as a whole represents "no one sort of real experience. Rather, as with the painting, parts of it represent one sort, parts of it, another." The ship does not represent any particular political situation (Athens, for example), but the "sort of experience philosophers in general have in relation to cities in general."[11] The point of comparison is that several different aspects of the world are combined in one form. McPherran thinks that the ship narrative is designed to problematize the lack of a governing rational part imaged in the goat-stag, and that Plato is making an analogical argument for the recognition of a tripartite soul together with the necessity for a proper education that will produce philosopher rulers.[12] Richard Hunter, who uses the goat-stag as a springboard for a fruitful discussion of Plato's use of composite creatures, suggests that the complexities of Plato's soul images propel us "towards a different kind of interpretative activity than does the 'Ship of State'", and that

9 For theriomorphic images of the soul in Plato see Morgan 2012; cf. Hunter 2012: 83–89.

10 McPherran 2006: 211–214.

11 So too Reeve 2006: 189–190.

12 McPherran 2006: 211–214.

"the goat-stag to which the 'Ship' image is compared was a comparatively harmless fantasy of eastern, and then Greek, art"—unlike the many-headed beast.[13]

The connection is clearly not obvious, but equally clearly it is one about which the text demands we think (otherwise what would be the point of marking it so emphatically?). How is the ship of state like a goat-stag? Socrates says that the situation of the potential philosopher-king is so complex that he must combine material from many sources (*ek pollôn auto sunagagein*). His wording here is reminiscent of that used to describe the philosophical activity of "collection" (*sunagôgê*) in the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates speaks of bringing together things that are scattered in many places in order to define what it is that one is teaching (265d). I am not arguing that Socrates is engaging in a formal process of philosophical collection here, but it does seem that he employs its rhetorical equivalent. The discussion in the *Phaedrus*, however, focuses on the creation of natural wholes, and one would not easily classify the goat-stag as such, rather the opposite—this seems to be the point. The ship image on the other hand, even though it is complex, does not seem unnatural. It is not just a simile but an extended narrative that expands on the characteristics of the *nauklēros* (ship-owner) and the sailors onboard.[14] Other essays in this volume talk about this passage in greater detail, but for present purposes we must linger briefly on the nature of its complexity. As we have already seen, Reeve finds it complex in that it is a generalizing description of multiple scenarios. This is correct, and we could expand upon the point by noting that the passage employs diverse focalizations and an explicitly iterative description of what the sailors on the ship do: they're *always* quarreling, *sometimes* they kill or throw overboard the one who has persuaded the ship-owner. We are also told their thoughts: they don't believe that there is any skill of helmsmanship. So we could say that what is tragelaphic is the narrative quality of the image, its construction of a paradigmatic situation with many variables. The images that we have met in the previous books of the *Republic* are not so complex. At the beginning of the first wave, Socrates compares his discursive situation to that of someone who has been thrown into an ocean or a swimming pool and must swim for it (453d), or at 465d we hear that the guardians will live the life of those who have been victors in the Olympic Games. There is nothing really comparable to the ship of state in terms of scope. The issue with this line of interpretation is that the ship metaphor, no matter how narratologically complex, does not seem to be really

13 Hunter 2012: 83.

14 For the *nauklēros*, see Keyt 2006: 191–192.

tragelaphic: something formed of unrelated pieces that are forced together by the determination of the artist. The ship of state, as others have noticed, is an old metaphor (even "hackneyed"), and one that Socrates at 489a thinks will be transparent to his audience.[15]

So why talk of goat-stags? To answer this question we must consider the image in the broader context of the *Republic*'s three waves, since I will argue that the goat-stag is best understood as an expression of the paradox generated by the third wave. These waves of paradox occupy books 5, 6, and 7. At the beginning of Book 5, Socrates is about to narrate the differing types of souls and constitutions when he is stopped by Polemarchus and Adeimantus, who accuse him of intellectual laziness because he has taken it for granted that in his ideal city women and children will be held in common. Socrates reluctantly agrees to explain, although the argument will be difficult. The education of women is the first wave, and this is followed by a second: the holding of women and children in common, a practice that Socrates must prove is not only beneficial but feasible. He talks at length about the benefits and the civic and military structures that would enable them, and he seems inclined to go on indefinitely talking about the rules of war until (471c) he is stopped by Glaucon, who sternly summons him to the discussion of the feasibility of such a state. This is the third wave: how such a constitution could come into being. Socrates reminds his interlocutors that their original goal was to find out what justice was and what a just man would be like; they did not embark upon the construction of the ideal city in order to prove that it was possible (472b–d). He illustrates this point, significantly, by making an analogy with a painter:

> "Do you think that someone who has painted a model of how the most beautiful human being would be and who has rendered everything in the picture competently would be any the worse a painter if he could not demonstrate that it was also possible for such a person to come into existence?"
>
> —"No, by Zeus, I at least would not," he said.[16]
>
> 472d

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15 Brock 2013: 53–67 ("hackneyed" at 57). Hunter 2012: 68–81 has an excellent discussion of how the image may respond to Aristophanes' *Knights* and Pericles' Funeral Oration in Thucydides, and concludes that the ship image "is in fact so closely tied to the literary heritage in part in order to make the break represented by the subsequent images all the more marked. Plato is here setting himself in competition with the literary heritage, and replacing its modes of 'likeness' with modes appropriate to philosophy" (87).

16 Οἴει ἂν οὖν ἧττόν τι ἀγαθὸν ζωγράφον εἶναι ὃς ἂν γράψας παράδειγμα οἷον ἂν εἴη ὁ κάλλιστος

Just so, their discussion will be no less reasonable if they cannot prove that it is possible to found the just city. Socrates will, nevertheless, try to show how it would be possible to found such a city, and he proceeds by making the startling proposal that it can only be founded when philosophers become kings (473c–e). The feasibility of Kallipolis is tied to the possibility of philosopher-kings, and this discussion of possibility is illustrated through the image of a painter trying to picture "the most beautiful human being." In retrospect, it seems clear that this most beautiful person should be associated with the philosopher-king. What would such perfection look like? I propose that it would look like a goat-stag, and that the painting image at 472d is resumed at 488a. The analogy with painting in this instance focuses not on the mimetic representation of an object in the physical world but on the imaginative and philosophically-informed creation of an ideal.

The nature of the philosopher-king needs to be carefully laid out, a process that begins at the end of Book 5 by distinguishing the philosopher from the lover of opinion, the *philodoxos*, and continues at the start of Book 6, where Socrates concludes that the guardians of the city must be philosophers who can grasp the truth. Knowledge is the most important qualification, and if the guardian has this, it's unlikely he will lack any other virtue (484d). Yet knowledge is not the only requirement. Experience (*empeiria*) is also necessary; if knowledge and experience can be combined, then all will be well. Socrates undertakes to show in what way his guardians will be able to have both qualities (485a). This is a crucial move: the guardian must combine knowledge and experience and political virtues, and at 487a Socrates seems to be finishing up his presentation by making Glaucon admit that not even Blame personified could find fault with such a way of life. This is where Adeimantus breaks in with his objection and his checkers simile. His point is that it is implausible to many to imagine that the political virtues and experience necessary for guardianship of the city could be found in a philosopher. If one looks around at the fate of those who pursue philosophy in the contemporary city, the majority of them are bizarre, if not totally depraved, and the decent sort seem useless to the city. It seems that in the view of most Athenians philosophy disqualifies one for political expertise. If this is accurate, then it is no wonder that Socrates proceeds to characterize the difficulty experienced by the decent sort in the *polis* in terms of the goat-stag analogy. The combination of philosophy and

ἄνθρωπος καὶ πάντα εἰς τὸ γράμμα ἱκανῶς ἀποδοὺς μὴ ἔχῃ ἀποδεῖξαι ὡς καὶ δυνατὸν γενέσθαι τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα;
—Μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἔφη.

kingship seems impossible, and this is why one might conceive the philosopher-king as a goat-stag. The *tragelaphos* is an unreal composite, paradigmatic of a combination that strikes people as far-fetched and fantastic.

3 The Goat-Stag in Aristophanes and Aristotle

We can find some confirmation, both retrospective and prospective, for this approach by considering the appearances of goat-stags outside Plato, in Aristophanes and Aristotle. My first exhibit is taken from the *agon* of Euripides and Aeschylus in Aristophanes' *Frogs* where each criticizes the other's poetry. At stake is which one of them will be brought back from Hades to save the city. Euripides thinks that Aeschylus is pretentious and incomprehensible:

> Euripides: [he wouldn't say a single intelligible word] but only Scamanders, or moats, or shields bronze-bossed and blazoned with griffin-eagles, and huge craggy utterances that weren't easy to decipher.
> Dionysus: By heaven, I myself "have lain awake through long stretches of night trying to figure out" what kind of bird a zooming horsecock is.
> Aeschylus: It was carved on the ships as a figurehead, you ignoramus!
> Dionysus: And here I thought it was Philoxenus' son, Eryxis!
> Euripides: But really, should one write about a *rooster* in tragedy?
> Aeschylus: And what about you, you enemy of the gods, what sort of things did you write about?
> Euripides: Certainly not horsecocks or goatstags, like you, the sort of things they embroider on Persian tapestries.[17]
> *Frogs* 928–938

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17 Ευ. ἀλλ' ἢ Σκαμάνδρους καὶ τάφρους κἀπ' ἀσπίδων ἐπόντας
γρυπαιέτους χαλκηλάτους καὶ ῥήμαθ' ἱππόκρημνα,
ἃ ξυμβαλεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδι' ἦν. (930)
Δι. νὴ τοὺς θεούς, ἐγὼ γοῦν
ἤδη ποτ' ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ νυκτὸς διηγρύπνησα
τὸν ξουθὸν ἱππαλεκτρυόνα ζητῶν τίς ἐστιν ὄρνις.
Αι. σημεῖον ἐν ταῖς ναυσίν, ὠμαθέστατ', ἐνεγέγραπτο.
Δι. ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν Φιλοξένου γ' ᾤμην Ἔρυξιν εἶναι.
Ευ. εἶτ' ἐν τραγῳδίαις ἐχρῆν κἀλεκτρυόνα ποιῆσαι;
Αι. σὺ δ', ὦ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρέ, ποῖ' ἄττ' ἐστὶν ἅττ' ἐποίεις;
Ευ. οὐχ ἱππαλεκτρυόνας, μὰ Δί', οὐδὲ τραγελάφους, ἅπερ σύ,
ἃν τοῖσι παραπετάσμασιν τοῖς Μηδικοῖς γράφουσιν·
The translation is taken from Henderson 2002.

Here the goat-stag is last in a series of fantastic creatures with which Aeschylus peoples, if that is the right word, his tragedies. Dionysus has spent many a long night trying to figure out what they are, without success. Aeschylus counters that the *hippalektryon* was used as a sign on ships.[18] These sorts of creatures are so outré that they are connected with the fabulous orient, even though the *hippalektryon* does not appear in Near-Eastern art. No one in Athens knows what they are, and it doesn't matter whether this is true (it probably was not since several are to be found on Attic ceramics dating from the second quarter of the sixth century down to the middle of the fifth), only that it could be represented as being the case.[19]

In Aristophanes, then, the goat-stag is one of those puzzling things that does not exist, the mere thought of which is enough to keep one awake at night. Even more suggestive is that the goat-stag has a history in post-Platonic tradition as a paradigm case of a word that has no reference.[20] It comes up four times in Aristotle, who uses it (sometimes together with other composite monsters) as an example of something that does not exist.[21] This is clear from *Physics* 208a30–31:

> What does not exist is nowhere, for where is the goat-stag or the sphinx?[22]

The example in *De Interpretatione* is more complex. Here Aristotle is making the point that no noun is true or false in and of itself:

> Thus names and verbs by themselves—for instance "man" or "white" when nothing further is added—are like the thoughts that are without combination and separation; for so far they are neither true nor false. A sign of this is that even "goat-stag" signifies something but not, as yet, anything true or false—unless "is" or "is not" is added (either simply or with reference to time).[23]
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> *Int.* 16a13–18

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18 In Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*, it seems to have been painted on Protesilaus' ship (*TrGF* 134). See Camporeale 1967: 263–264.

19 Camporeale 1967: 248–259.

20 Sillitti 1980: 23, "un esempio non solo d'inesistenza, ma anche di impossibilità."

21 Listed at Sillitti 1980: 30: *Int.* 16a13–18; *An. pr.* 49a24; *An. post.* 92b7; *Ph.* 208a30.

22 τὸ γὰρ μὴ ὂν οὐδαμοῦ εἶναι· ποῦ γάρ ἐστι τραγέλαφος ἢ σφίγξ;

23 τὰ μὲν οὖν ὀνόματα αὐτὰ καὶ τὰ ῥήματα ἔοικε τῷ ἄνευ συνθέσεως καὶ διαιρέσεως νοήματι, οἷον τὸ ἄνθρωπος ἢ λευκόν, ὅταν μὴ προστεθῇ τι· οὔτε γὰρ ψεῦδος οὔτε ἀληθές πω. σημεῖον δ' ἐστὶ τοῦδε· καὶ γὰρ ὁ τραγέλαφος σημαίνει μέν τι, οὔπω δὲ ἀληθὲς ἢ ψεῦδος, ἐὰν μὴ τὸ εἶναι ἢ μὴ

Even a noun like "man" has no inherent truth-value, but gains it when combined with other words. Once we see it in operation, problems of truth and falsity arise. The goat-stag is cited as an extreme case; even this strange (and, implicitly, non-existent) creature has a truth-value only in the context of a sentence. Several Aristotelian commentators continue to work on these issues (Ammonius, for example, speaks of the "notorious" [*poluthrullêtos*] goat-stag[24]) and, as argued by Giovanna Sillitti, arguably go beyond Aristotle. For some of them, the issue is not only that the goat-stag is a non-existent because it observably does not exist, but because it never could. Nature does not produce such creatures.[25]

Nothing in Plato gives us reason to believe that the problem of referentiality with regard to goat-stags was theorized by his time, but the passage of Aristophanes does show that such creatures posed problems of intelligibility, to say the least, and we may make a similar inference on the basis of Socrates' comments on rationalizing myth as presented in the *Phaedrus*. There Socrates rejects a rationalizing interpretation of the myth of Boreas and Oreithyia on the grounds that if he did so, he would have to explain also monsters such as centaurs, the Chimaera, Pegasuses and Gorgons (again, a kind of interpretative worst-case scenario; 229d–230a). This suggests that the issue of the status of compound monsters was a live one at the end of the fifth and beginning of the fourth century. The trajectory that we see fully expressed in Aristotle and the commentators was nascent in Aristophanes.

Let us return to the real-world status of the philosopher-king. As we have seen, the end of Book 5 shows that there is a real question in the minds of Socrates' interlocutors about what "philosopher" means. Socrates confesses that he hesitated to say that political power and philosophy must coincide because it would cause a wave of laughter and contempt (473c), and the discussion after that spends some time distinguishing philosophers from pretenders to philosophy (the lovers of sights and sounds and the *philodoxoi*). So too, the discussion that follows the ship image will spend some time on those vicious types who give philosophy a bad name but are not true philosophers. The passage on which this paper focuses, with its image illustrating the construction

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εἶναι προστεθῇ ἢ ἁπλῶς ἢ κατὰ χρόνον. Translation from Ackrill 1963: 43. Cf. his note on the passage (1963: 114): "The main point about 'goat-stag' is that it applies to nothing, but the fact that it is a compound word is not irrelevant to the preceding discussion: not every type of combination guarantees truth-value to an expression."

24 *in de Int.* 184,7–9; Sillitti 1980: 37.

25 For the commentators, see Sillitti 1980: 37–51, 23–66 (on Alexander of Aphrodisias and Philoponus).

of images and the narrative vision of the ship of state, is at the centre of an ongoing discussion about the nature of that strange creature, the philosopher, and the potential for creating a new hybrid that combines knowledge of the truth and political expertise. When Adeimantus makes his objection he is fixating on the problem taken up by the Aristotelian commentators: it is not just whether a philosopher-ruler can be seen in the wild—everyone knows that this has not happened—but whether it is possible for such a hybrid to exist at all. The issue is, as we have also seen, intimately tied to the question of the feasibility of founding an ideal state in the real world, even though this question was not an original focus of the discussion. Kallipolis would be none the worse for being merely a paradigm city since, as we are reminded at the end of Book 9, its actual existence is beside the point: it is laid up in heaven for reference purposes (592b). So too a painter would be none the worse if he painted a beautiful picture of a human being, but could not prove that it could come into being. Yet in the case of the philosopher-king the problem of feasibility cannot easily be dismissed, since the hybrid is created precisely in order to present the smallest change that would allow an ideal city to come into existence (473b). The subsequent discussion about the happiness of the philosopher-rulers and the necessity of compelling them to abandon the contemplation of eternal truths and take their turn at ruling the city shows that the compound is neither an entirely natural nor an easy one (519c–520e). Like the goat stag (but with greater conceptual power) the philosopher-king exists as a potential hybrid of doubtful viability, and it is understandable that the prospect might engender hilarity in the audience of scoffers projected by Socrates (473c; or, doubtless, in Aristophanes!) and concerns about the justice or felicity of the combination in the case of Socrates' interlocutors. Whatever lens we use to examine the issues connected with the philosopher-king, the goat-stag introduction to the ship of state image encapsulates neatly and pregnantly the nature of the problem at issue.

4 The Goat-Stag in Book 6

So far I have concentrated on reading the goat-stag in terms of the seemingly awkward hybridity of the philosopher-king when set against current standards of human experience. Yet it may also be useful to return to the problem of how the image helps us understand the other images of the philosopher's plight in Book 6. Even if I am correct to connect the goat-stag with the philosopher-king, there is still the problem of how Socrates' descriptive project for the philosopher in the polis fulfils his prediction that he will need to draw material

from many sources. In this final section of the paper, I suggest that a broader focus is necessary than the ship of state image considered in isolation (even given its narrative complexity), and that the scope of the goat-stag image extends over a whole series of images in Book 6. The hybridity of the goat-stag corresponds to the variety of comparisons Socrates uses, he explains: first, the plight of upright philosophers, and second, why so many philosophically-gifted people turn out to be vicious. The ship of state passage has finished its original task of explaining the plight of upright philosophers by 489c; what follows expands the discussion to the reasons for the corruption of the gifted until, at the end of Book 6 and the beginning of Book 7, Socrates turns to the education of his philosopher-kings and their vision of the Good in the complex of the images of Sun, Line, and Cave.

This is a particularly rich stretch of dialogue, generously informed by lively images:

(1) At 493a–c, Socrates narrates how the talented proto-philosopher concludes that wisdom is understanding the mood of the crowd, and he compares this experience to training someone how to approach and handle a dangerous beast.

(2) From 495c–e Socrates uses a complex of three different images to explain what happens when the truly philosophical abandon philosophy. They leave her deserted and unaccomplished (or perhaps "unmarried;"[26] *atelê*), and in the absence of any worthy candidates those who are unworthy approach as if she were "an orphan bereft of kinsmen". Then we are told that the untalented leap towards philosophy from their own vulgar preoccupations "like those who escape from prison and flee into temples" (495d). Finally Socrates asks whether these people differ at all from a short and bald metalworker who has come upon some money and has recently been released from bondage. He has washed himself at the bathhouse, wears a new cloak, and is got up like a bridegroom, intending to marry the master's daughter because she is impoverished and abandoned (495e). These images all play with similar themes but do not form a single narrative. It is natural to connect the bereft and unmarried orphan of the first image with the impoverished master's daughter from the third. Similarly, the bald metalworker released from bondage reminds us of the prison escapees from the second image. Philosophy is the heiress daughter who is pursued by those from inferior and (relatively speaking) banausic crafts,

26 Adam 1902, vol. 2: 27.

suitors who are also jailbirds. The deployment of the temple in the second image emphasizes the supernatural, almost divine, status of the art of philosophy.

(3) Meanwhile the true philosopher sees the madness of contemporary politics and lives a quiet life. He is compared first to someone who has fallen among wild animals and is neither willing to join them doing injustice nor capable, as one person only, of holding out against all the savages around him (496d). Philosophers, therefore, keep quiet and mind their own business "like someone in a storm who avoids a dust-storm or rain driven by the wind by standing under a little wall." (496d).

(4) At 497b Socrates starts to sum up his explanation of why philosophy is slandered as it is. None of the present constitutions is suitable for a philosopher:

> Like foreign seed, sown in another ground, is accustomed to fade away and pass, defeated, into the native stock, so too this race now does not keep its full power but degenerates into a different character.[27]

Now the potential philosopher is like a seedling growing in a hostile climate that assimilates to native plants. The problem is that philosophical seed has never been sown in its native habitat, and this is why it is easy to revile contemporary philosophy for uselessness and viciousness. It is because of these difficulties, Socrates says, that he was hesitant to describe his philosopher-kings. Yet it would only be reasonable to mock him, he continues, if it were impossible for a philosopher to become king or for a ruler to be inspired with a true love for philosophy. Nothing, however, has shown this to be impossible; it is only difficult (499b–d). It is interesting that the image here focuses on the attenuation of one kind of seed or race and its passage into a local growth: another (negative) instance of hybridity. The problem in producing the philosophical goat-stag is partly environmental; since conditions are not right, the correct kind of growth seems impossible. The perspective of the native stock would surely align with such an assessment, just as Athenians in Socrates' day mock the specimens of philosopher they see. Like the Aristotelian commentators, they think it impossible for nature to produce a goat-stag.

27 ὥσπερ ξενικὸν σπέρμα ἐν γῇ ἄλλῃ σπειρόμενον ἐξίτηλον εἰς τὸ ἐπιχώριον φιλεῖ κρατούμενον ἰέναι, οὕτω καὶ τοῦτο τὸ γένος νῦν μὲν οὐκ ἴσχειν τὴν αὑτοῦ δύναμιν, ἀλλ' εἰς ἀλλότριον ἦθος ἐκπίπτειν·

(5) As Socrates concludes his examination of the contemporary reputation of philosophy he suggests that the bad attitude of the majority towards philosophy is caused by "those who burst in from outside in an unseemly revel, abusing each other and engaging in quarrels and always making arguments about people, acting in a way that least befits philosophy" (500b).[28] Here we no longer find the image formally introduced by a "like" or a "just as." The present state of philosophy simply is a drunken *komos*.

(6) When Socrates proceeds to discuss the education of his philosopher-kings and the intellectual ascent towards knowledge, he does so with the famous images of sun, line, and cave (506d–518b). It is beyond the scope of the current paper to discuss these images in any detail, but it is worth noting the remark Socrates' makes right after he has finished describing the cave: "We must fit this entire image, my dear Glaucon, to the things that were said previously" (517a–b). He is of course referring to the images of sun and line he has just spoken of. Once the philosopher has left the cave of polis experience he can see the real world, illuminated by the sun of the Good. This culminating series of images stands by itself, but also picks up on some aspects of previous comparisons, notably the idea of prisoners and the use of images to illustrate images. Thus at 514a the inhabitants of the cave are described as having been fettered since childhood in such a way that they can only look in front of them, a picture that immediately brings to mind the bald metalworker of 495e who has just been released from bondage and wants to marry the master's daughter. The scenario is not, of course, the same, but the resonance is still meaningful: normal life in the polis is the equivalent of living in bonds. The metalworker who embodies the pretender to philosophy has been freed from his bondage, but has no hope of leaving the cave.

The narrative of the philosopher's ascent from and return to the cave reinforces the notion of a double or hybrid life. Part will be spent gazing on the forms and part spent governing the city. Yet since the latter is less desirable they will do it only since they are compelled to do so by the demands of justice. The terms used to describe this justified demand are notable: the philosopher must take his or her turn at ruling because (s)he has been trained for this task. A true philosopher who came into being in another type of city would not have the

28 αἰτίους εἶναι τοὺς ἔξωθεν οὐ προσῆκον ἐπεισκεκωμακότας, λοιδορουμένους τε αὑτοῖς καὶ φιλαπεχθημόνως ἔχοντας καὶ ἀεὶ περὶ ἀνθρώπων τοὺς λόγους ποιουμένους, ἥκιστα φιλοσοφίᾳ πρέπον ποιοῦντας. One is irresistibly drawn here to think of the drunken epiphany of Alcibiades and his revellers at Agathon's dinner party in the *Symposium*.

same obligation, since "they grow spontaneously in a city where the constitution is unwilling, but it's right that what grows spontaneously owes its nurture to nothing" (520b). The language here resumes the theme of growth in native or foreign soil used at 497b (#4 above). We saw previously that spontaneous and successful growth of true philosophers is both difficult and unlikely. Here we learn that in Kallipolis philosophers are produced because of the regulation of civic life by the law, which creates them (520a). Once again this characterization is consistent with the notion of a hybrid goat-stag, created by determined and artistic combination (or, to preserve the seed metaphor, cultivation).

I submit that when Socrates says "We must fit this entire image to the things that were said previously" he refers not just to the mental combination of the sun, line, and cave images, but to the entire stretch of images listed above. Just as one must combine sun, line, and cave to reach the picture Socrates intends, so we must fit together the ship of state, the orphaned heiress, the prison escapees taking refuge in a temple, the bald-headed tinker, the man among wild animals, the man taking refuge from the storm, and the seed sown on foreign soil in order to gain an accurate appreciation of life for the real or pseudo philosopher inside and outside of Kallipolis. The language of addition/fastening (*prosapteon*) encourages us to do so. None of the images between 487e and 500b are purely visual; they all have a certain amount of narrative extension (some more than others), though none of them are as complex as the helmsman. All of them, however, can be seen as part of the goat-stag. One comparison, that of the helmsman and the ship of state, cannot tell the whole story about the situation of philosophy in the contemporary city. This is a tale so complex that Socrates must bring in material from many different sources to tell it. The group of images comes largely—and melodramatically—from the life of the city. Some are almost comic, such as the abandoned heiress with unwanted suitors, and are thus well suited to a context where Socrates has been at pains to suggest that his ideas for curing the woes of the city will seem laughable.

5 Conclusion

Socrates' activities throughout the passages considered in this paper are, I have argued, illuminated by comparing them to the activity of a painter putting together a composite creature, a goat-stag. Since this is a philosophical activity it is unsurprising that the imagery he uses can also be applied to philosophical actors within his vision. It is no accident that the Ship of State image comes in the midst of the third "wave" of the argument, after several references have

been made to having to swim for it and to the danger of being overwhelmed.[29] Whereas no knowledgeable person is in charge on the ship of state and it is unlikely to get where it needs to go, Socrates is running the discussion in the *Republic*. Although he is threatened by challenges from his interlocutors (the three waves), they are all agreed on their goal, are engaged in a shared search and will eventually reach the end of their discursive voyage. The sea of argument is also the sea of life.

Even more informative are extensive parallels between Socrates and the philosopher-king in the realm of art. Both the philosopher-king and Socrates are artists, whether sculptors or painters. As early as 361d Socrates had spoken of Glaucon's portrayal of the just and unjust man as statues, polished up and ready for competition, and Glaucon returns to the conceit at 540c, saying that Socrates has made his philosopher-kings absolutely gorgeous, as if he were a statue maker. The painting metaphor occurs repeatedly. We have already considered 472d, where Socrates says that we would not blame a painter if he painted a beautiful man and could not prove that it could come into being. Yet the philosopher-king is also an artist. At 484c–d the lovers of opinion do not have a clear *paradeigma* of what is true in their souls and cannot, like painters, look to what is truest and transfer that knowledge to everyday world. At 501a–c, this image is developed when we learn that the philosopher-king is a painter who uses the divine model: starting from a blank slate, sketching the constitution, blending the pigment/human likeness out of the various ways of life within the city working on the basis of what Homer called "godlike" (501b).[30] Such a person is a "painter of constitutions" (501c). The philosopher-king also creates his vision by mixing different things together.

How does Socrates' tragelaphic painterly technique as he surmounts the third wave compare with the achievement of this paragon, and why do we find such extensive use of the painting metaphor in a dialogue that notoriously disparages mimetic art? The answer to the second question lies, as others have observed, in the use to which images are put. Some of the discussion in the dialogue does indeed focus on painting as illusionism, but it is also clear that imagery has an important role to play in the development of philosophical argumentation.[31] It is not just that images are intended to capture the imagi-

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29 441c, 453d, 457b–c, 472a.

30 **συμμειγνύντες τε καὶ κεραννύντες** ἐκ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων τὸ **ἀνδρείκελον**, ἀπ' ἐκείνου τεκμαιρόμενοι, ὃ δὴ καὶ Ὅμηρος ἐκάλεσεν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐγγιγνόμενον θεοειδές τε καὶ θεοείκελον. For the pun on *andreikelon* here (a flesh-colored pigment made by mixing different colours together, as well as a human form) see Adam 1902, vol. 2, 42.

31 For imagery as part of philosophical investigation see Pender 2003: 60–61; Petraki 2011: 78–84, 103–105, 215–216, and *passim*.

nation of the non-philosophical multitude, but that imagery used correctly can point beyond itself to something deeper (or higher).[32] This is particularly so in the case of the goat-stag, hedged as it is by methodological considerations of the nature of the image-making process. We are asked to reflect philosophically on the separate components of philosopher-kingship and on their combination. We must judge whether such a hybrid is feasible in our world and what kind of genetic engineering project would bring it about. What it would "look like" once realized is perhaps a matter of perspective. The gorgeous statues produced by Socrates at 540c, Socrates' appeal to the painting of an ideally beautiful human at 472d, and the god-like images produced by the philosopher-kings at 501b all hang together as harmonious expressions of perfection and seemingly have little to do with an animal whose front half is a stag and whose back half is a goat. On the one hand, the composite nature of the creature reflects the care that is needed to produce a philosopher who can be prevailed upon to govern the city. It is not a perfectly felicitous combination from the point of view of the individual philosopher. On the other hand, the philosopher-king would be a perfectly just and knowledgeable human being, committed to reproducing knowledge and justice in his subjects to the greatest possible degree. This way of life would certainly make him or her an ideally beautiful human being. The incongruity is difficult, but not insuperable. It is the mention of the contemporary world that generates the image of the goat-stag, and Socrates focalizes the nature of the philosopher through the eyes of an average Athenian. From this perspective the goat-stag reflects the Athenian predilection for seeing the ridiculous and the monstrous in anything that does not conform to their set notions of society. From an Athenian point of view, then, Socrates is creating a goat-stag, but if we looked at it with the eyes of truth we might see that it is not a goat-stag at all, but a picture of a beautiful person.

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32 Gonzalez 1998: 129–149 ("If … the imitation makes no pretence to accuracy and does not hide its inferiority to the original, then it can be an effective tool in making the original manifest" 143); Patterson 1997: 343–347 (with a very useful discussion of how this works in the case of the *Republic*'s agonistic imagery: "his imagery is at once a reflection of, and an entirely fitting and proper stimulus and encouragement to, the intellectual desire, discipline, and stout-heartedness essential to the life of philosophy," 347).

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Poetry and the Image of the Tyrant in Plato's *Republic*

Penelope Murray

> The tendency to regard arguments as expressing the content of a philosophy, image, story and conversation as giving it a pleasing, decorative surface goes very deep in our entire philosophical tradition. Philosophy has developed a style for itself that powerfully expresses its claim to have separated out the rational and irrational, to have purified itself of the confusions of emotion and sense, which are the stuff of poetic discourse. The deductive argument keeps these messy irrational elements at bay, protecting reason's structures against them. It is evident that the question of philosophical style is connected at a very deep level with a conception of the rational and the relation between 'rational' and 'irrational'. Plato's writing tells us, in its multifaceted progress, that these questions need to be reopened, these polarities re-examined.[1]

It hardly needs stressing in the context of the present book that imagery plays an integral part in Plato's writing, and Martha Nussbaum's words, quoted above, express very eloquently the need to take imagery seriously as a mode of meaning. Imagery does not work like argument, not least because, as Roger Scruton has put it, 'figurative uses of language aim not to describe things, but to connect them'.[2] It is this associative power of imagery which I shall be exploring in this paper, which will focus on the inter-related themes of poetry, tyranny and desire in Plato's *Republic*. Unlike many of the other contributors to this volume, who consider how particular images are used to illustrate arguments, I am concerned, rather, with the poetic qualities of Plato's writing whereby images and verbal associations are woven into the fabric of his text in a way that suggests thematic connections, but without any explanation of how those connections might work. In other words, I am interested not so much in the explanatory function of imagery, as in its power to generate meaning through associations that are not spelt out (and may not even be consciously intended), but which are nevertheless there for the reader to interpret, just as we find in

1 Nussbaum (1982), 91.
2 Scruton (2011), 104. See also Silk (2003), 126–131.

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the case of, say, Pindar or Aeschylus. Plato is not, of course, a poet, but the poetical quality of his writing, remarked on since antiquity, is not merely a surface phenomenon; it is an essential component of his philosophical style.[3]

Beginning with the banishment of poetry in *Republic* x, I argue that the *erôs* which Socrates confesses to feeling for Homer and his fellow poets has its analogue in the master-passion which takes control of the tyrant's soul at 572e–575a8. This figure of *erôs tyrannos* is an important theme in tragedy, and part of my paper is taken up with showing how tyranny and tragedy are brought together in the course of the dialogue: not only are the tragic poets alleged to be supporters of tyrants (568a–d), the tyrant is a favourite figure in tragedy, and Plato's own image of the tyrant is presented in strikingly tragic terms. These observations might be considered mildly interesting, but of no great significance, were it not for the fact that the critique of poetry in book x reprises some of the central themes already encountered in the poetic portrayal of the tragic tyrant of the earlier books in a way that invites comparison between the two, but without specifying how they might be related. The connection lies, I suggest, in the psychological parallelism between poetry and tyranny, which underlines the threat that it poses and reinforces the argument for its banishment.[4]

Towards the end of the discussion of poetry in book x Plato describes poetry as an *erôs*, a passion from which all right thinking people should tear themselves away, like lovers who realise their passion is doing them no good (607e). The complexity of the whole passage in which this image is situated (607b–608b) has most recently been examined in detail by Stephen Halliwell who emphasises its deep ambiguity, and proposes that Socrates' expressions of hesitation and attraction towards poetry dramatically undercut the argument for banishing it. What Socrates really wants, Halliwell maintains, is a 'rapprochement between poetry and philosophy, indeed a reversal of the verdict of 'banishment' … and a welcome return of poetry to the city'. And he summarises the main points of his analysis thus:

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3 On Plato's use of metaphor see Silk (1974), 39, 48 n. 24, 220–221, and on the suppression of logical links in metaphor see the remarks of Renaut in this volume, p. 139. On the problems of intentionalism, see Silk (1974), 33–34, 59–64, 233–235. Notwithstanding the Platonic Socrates' concern with intentionalism in relation to the poets, who are often taken to task for not knowing what they mean, there is no guarantee that every effect in Plato's own text is the result of conscious intention.

4 Some poetry will, of course, remain (see e.g. Burnyeat (1999) 255–277), but the ban will certainly include Homer and tragedy, my main concern in this paper.

> In terms of the passage's intertwined strands of imagery, we can see that the 'trial' of poetry has reached a verdict which is only provisionally and uncertainly upheld; that the lover's passion is unlikely ever to die …; and that the protective incantation will have to be repeated every time one comes into the presence of poetry, without ever permanently relieving the soul of the desire to listen to her. There is, in short, no cure for poetry in Plato's *Republic*, only a prescription to counteract a potentially pathological addiction to the emotional needs released by poetry with a commitment to search for a way of rechannelling the *erôs* that drives those needs into forms of poetic experience which harmonise pleasure with truth and goodness.[5]

I would be the first to agree that there is a conflict here, that Plato's Socrates is drawn to poetry himself and probably even passionately in love with it, that the possibility of a rehabilitation of poetry is left open, and indeed that Socrates envisages himself and Glaucon continuing to listen to poetry whilst attempting to innoculate themselves against it by the enchantment of their argument (608). And I agree that there is no simple way of resolving the ambivalence expressed at the close of Socrates' second critique of poetry. There is a real *agôn* here, as Socrates himself says (608b). But, we should not therefore minimise what is said about the harm that poetry can do, and the radical damage that it threatens to the minds of those who hear it (595b5–6): if the banishment of poetry is provisional, so too is the hypothetical possibility of its restoration, and I am not persuaded that in the ideal state envisaged in the *Republic* philosophers are going to spend their time indulging in the dangerous pleasures of listening to the works of Homer and the tragic poets, to which Socrates and Glaucon are apparently addicted. If *they* cannot be cured of this *erôs*, that is because their passion for such poetry has been inbred in them by the 'fine constitutions' (*tôn kalôn politeiôn*) in which they live (607e6–8): the culture in which they have been reared and nurtured, is presented almost as an excuse for their love of poetry, reminding us that even philosophers are not immune from the influences of the environment which they inhabit. The general point has already been made in more graphic terms in the image of the cave, which is introduced explicitly as an illustration of our experience in relation to *paideia* (both education and culture) and its opposite, *apaideusia* (514a1–2). When Glaucon comments on the strangeness of the image of men gazing at shadows and unable to turn their heads around because

5 Halliwell (2011), 242, 252, 261.

from childhood (*ek paidôn*) their legs and necks are fixed in chains, Socrates replies that they are 'like us' (515a5): we are all prisoners of our education and culture, absorbing the values transmitted by the shadowy images that are set before us, not least by the poets, the traditional educators of Greece.[6] That view is echoed later on in book X when even Socrates himself is reluctant to criticise Homer, the leader of all those fine tragic poets whose works he is about to condemn, because of 'a certain love and respect for Homer that has possessed him since childhood' (*ek paidôs echousa*, 595b9–595c1), the phrasing suggesting a degree of compulsion about his attachment.

The importance of early education and the formative power of culture, both for good or ill, is, of course, a recurrent theme in the *Republic* where the welfare of the individual human soul is intimately linked with the cultural and political climate in which it is nurtured. Thus, in book III we are told that if young guardians are to develop the right qualities of character, they must be surrounded by images of beauty as they grow up (401b–402a) so that they benefit (*ôphelôntai*) from the influence that emanates from them, like a health-giving breeze in a salubrious region, and absorb grace and beauty imperceptibly into their souls. The idea is again forcefully stated in book VIII at 558b in the context of the degeneracy of democracy and its disdain for one of the key principles in the foundation of Kallipolis, that 'except in the case of transcendent natural gifts no one could ever become a good man unless from childhood his play and all his pursuits were concerned with things fair and good'.[7] Conversely, it is no accident that the decline of the ideal state is closely linked to the neglect of *mousikê* (546d–547b): culture, and particularly the early experiences of childhood, has an indelible effect on character.[8]

When Socrates reluctantly banishes the poetry he has loved since childhood, the erotic imagery in his peroration (607e4–608a5) underlines the allure of such poetry, but also reminds us of the threat that it poses: what was earlier described as a certain *philia* (love) and *aidôs* (respect) now becomes an *erôs*, a passion from which he must forcibly restrain himself in the interests of safeguarding the constitution (*politeia*) of his soul (608b1). *Erôs* in the *Republic* plays an ambivalent rôle as a primary appetitive desire (439d6–8) which dom-

6 For this interpretation see Burnyeat (1999), 238–249, further developed by Destrée (2013). On the image of the cave see further Ledbetter in this volume.

7 Unless otherwise indicated translations are from Shorey (1935).

8 Further references include 377a–b, 378d–e, 386a, 395c, 423e, 424a–e. See Lear (1992), 186–190 and Burnyeat (1999), the definitive article on this subject, which is dedicated, fittingly, to the memory of Lord Reith, the first Director-General of the BBC.

inates the soul of the tyrant (572e–575a), but also characterises the philosopher's passionate desire for knowledge of the truth (485b, 499c, 501d). That tyrants and philosophers should be brought together in this way is a paradox that has been much discussed,[9] and it is not my purpose here to consider further the question of how far the comparison should be pressed. But we should take note of an important passage in book III where Socrates distinguishes what he calls 'right love' (*orthôs erôs*), that is, 'a sober and harmonious love of the orderly and the beautiful', from sexual desire and the madness associated with Aphrodite (403a). These are different types of *erôs* with different objectives, exemplified by the philosopher and the tyrant respectively, whatever common ground there may be between them. But what of the *erôs* for poetry inbred in Socrates and Glaucon by the 'fine constitutions' in which they have been brought up?

It would be difficult to argue that the poetry which Socrates banishes from the *Republic*, poetic *mimesis* whose aim is pleasure (607c5), could be the object of 'a sober and harmonious love of the orderly and the beautiful'. Rather, the image of the lover who must forcibly put aside a love that he knows is doing him no good, together with the personification of poetry as a seductive female, links up with the earlier characterisation of mimetic art in general as a *hetaira* who consorts with an inferior part of the soul to bring forth base offspring (603a9–b5). This contrasts with the genuine lover of wisdom, whose *erôs* for philosophy leads the better part of his soul to consort with the true nature of each thing and beget intelligence and truth at 490a8–b7. The figure of the *hetaira*, it goes without saying, is a negative one in the *Republic*. Encountered for the first time in book II, *hetairai* are introduced into the luxurious, fevered type of city together with the entire class of *mimêtai* including, of course, poets at 373a–c. That association is reiterated at the end of the critique of poetry in book X. The identification of poetry as a *hetaira* (explicit at 603a–b, implicit at 607e) at this point is significant, because it is suggestive of the underlying relationship, indirectly conveyed throughout the tenth book of the *Republic*, between the appetitive part of the soul and the type of poetry that Plato here denounces: mimetic poetry whose goal is pleasure (607c–608a). As others before me have noted,[10] that relationship is never explicitly stated, but poetry and the appetites are linked at the level of diction, rhetoric and imagery, an obvious example being the much quoted passage at 606d1–7:

9 See e.g. Ludwig (2007), Scott (2007) and Obdrzalek (2013).

10 See especially Peponi (2012), 129–140, to whose discussion I am indebted.

> in regard to the emotions of sex and anger, and all the appetites and pains and pleasures of the soul which we say accompany all our actions, the effect of poetic imitation is the same. For it waters and fosters these feelings when what we ought to do is to dry them up, and it establishes them as our rulers when they ought to be ruled, to the end that we may be better and happier men instead of worse and more miserable.[11]

The real danger of indulging in a passion for poetry is that it sets up the wrong constitution in the soul, as is suggested by the political imagery above ('it establishes them as our rulers when they ought to be ruled'), and explicitly stated at 608b: anyone listening to poetry must be on his guard 'fearing for the polity (*politeia*) of his soul'. As Socrates explains at 605b–c, the mimetic poet appeals to the inferior part of the soul, he 'awakens' (*egeirei*) and 'fosters' (*trephei*) that element, strengthening it so that it destroys the rational part (*to logistikon*), setting up a 'vicious constitution' (*kakên politeian*) in each individual, just as when 'in a state one puts bad men in power and turns the city over to them and ruins the better sort'. The constitution of the soul has been a major theme of books VIII and IX, and the critique of poetry in book X begins with Socrates saying that there is all the more justification for the decision to ban imitative poetry from the state now that the parts of the soul have been distinguished (595a–b). How can there *not* be a connection between poetry and the decline of city and soul so graphically described in the previous books?

That connection is made through imagery rather than argument, which is no doubt why it has been largely ignored.[12] Poetry is not much discussed in the *Republic* between the end of book III and the beginning of Book X, but there is a sudden and unexpected reference to tragic poets (568a–d) in the tale of the decline from democracy to tyranny in book VIII, the ramifications of which suggest that it does more than simply add a little colour to the picture. The tyrant arises, says Socrates, when a champion and protector of the *dêmos* sheds blood, killing his fellow citizens and behaving like the man in the stories told about the shrine of Lycaean Zeus in Arcadia, where anyone who tastes a single

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11 καὶ περὶ ἀφροδισίων δὴ καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν ἐπιθυμητικῶν τε καὶ λυπηρῶν καὶ ἡδέων ἐν τῆι ψυχῆι, ἃ δή φαμεν πάσηι πράξει ἡμῖν ἕπεσθαι, ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἡμᾶς ἡ ποιητικὴ μίμησις ἐργάζεται. τρέφει γὰρ ταῦτα ἄρδουσα, δέον αὐχμεῖν, καὶ ἄρχοντα ἡμῖν καθίστησι, δέον ἄρχεσθαι αὐτά, ἵνα βελτίους τε καὶ εὐδαιμονέστεροι ἀντὶ χειρόνων καὶ ἀθλιωτέρων γιγνώμεθα.

12 Lear (1992) is a notable exception. Bushnell (1990) studies the figure of the tyrant in Renaissance tragedy, with an excellent first chapter on the Platonic roots of this theme, in which she points out that Plato's rejection of drama is inseparable from his argument against tyranny. See also Murray (2003).

morsel of human entrails mixed up with other sacrificial victims is inevitably transformed into a wolf (565d–566a). Losing his humanity and corrupted by his crimes, the tyrant purges the city of the best elements, and leaves in the worst, surrounding himself with a motley crew of liberated slaves and the drones who flock to him from outside, who together make up his new circle of admirers. This is where the tragic poets come in (568a–d, in my translation):

> 'It's not for nothing', says Socrates, 'that tragedy as a whole, and Euripides in particular, have a reputation for being wise (*sophon*) … amongst other things he says that 'tyrants are wise through their association with the wise', meaning evidently that these associates of his are wise. And he praises tyranny as god-like (*isotheon*), and says much else to the same effect, as do the other poets. But the tragic poets, since they are wise (*sophoi*) will forgive us[13] and others whose constitution is like ours, if we refuse to admit them to our state because they sing the praises of tyranny … no doubt they will go round other cities, hiring fine, sonorous and persuasive voices, gathering the crowds and drawing their constitutions towards tyrannies or democracies … In return for these services they are well paid and honoured, especially, of course, by tyrants, but secondly by democracy. But the higher they mount up our series of constitutions, the more their reputation flags, as if it were unable to go further through lack of breath.'

The tragedians are presented in a decidedly unflattering light here, as companions and associates of tyrants, whose reputation for wisdom amounts to nothing more than praise of their despotic masters. Euripides is a particular target, no doubt because of his reputation as a 'clever' poet, as depicted most famously in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, but there is perhaps also an allusion here to the time he spent in Macedonia as a guest at the court of Archelaus, whose tyrannical iniquities, whether real or imagined, are eloquently summarised by Polus in Plato's *Gorgias* (471a–d).[14] The fact that Socrates himself is said to have refused an invitation from Archelaus (Aristotle, *Rhet.*1398a24) would make the criticism of Euripides all the more pointed. In fact the first quotation, 'tyrants

13 Adeimantus agrees at 568c1–2 that the *kompsoi* among the tragedians will forgive them, a word used also of the corrupting associates of the democratic man at 572c.

14 On Archelaus see Moloney (2014), 234–240, who points out that we should, of course, be wary of the hostility that often colours Greek accounts of Macedonian culture. On Euripides and Macedonia see Revermann 1999/2000.

are wise through their association with the wise', is now attributed to Sophocles (fr. 14 Radt), but whatever its original context, it is used here to align the tragic poets with tyrants, whilst at the same time undermining their traditional claim to wisdom, *sophia*. The phrase 'god-like tyranny' (*isotheou turannidos*) does indeed occur in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (1169), where Hecuba, grieving over the body of the dead Asyanax, laments that he will never attain manhood, marriage or 'god-like tyranny', nor die defending his city, a context in which the word *turannis* has none of the negative connotations which it was later to acquire, but which can be conveniently ignored for the purposes of presenting Euripides as an admirer of tyrants. Other relevant passages include Eteocles' praise of tyranny (in the sense of autocratic rule) as 'the greatest of the gods' in the *Phoenician Women* (506) when justifying his refusal to yield power to his brother, Polyneices. But in the play that view is explicitly rejected by Jocasta, who says that, on the contrary, Eteocles has been maddened by ambition (*philotimia*), the basest of divinities and an unjust goddess (531–532): it would be far better for him to honour equality (*isotês*) that 'binds together friends with friends, cities with cities and allies with allies' (535–538). Here again, contextualising Eteocles' words would undermine Socrates' characterisation of Euripides as a tyrant-lover, which depends on the time-honoured method of selective quotation, and attributing views expressed by characters within the plays to the poet himself. Similarly, Socrates might cite the words of the herald who extols the advantages of strong autocratic rule over government by the rabble in the *Suppliant Women* (409–425), but it would be counterproductive for him to recall Theseus' response, beginning with the line, 'There is nothing more hostile to a city than a tyrant' (429). For his purpose is not to offer any serious consideration of the theme of tyranny in tragic theatre, but rather to forge a connection between the two.

In effect the passage as a whole suggests that tyranny and tragedy are mutually interdependent, for tragedy not only flourishes in the worst types of constitution, it is also the cultural vehicle through which such constitutions are made to look attractive. As Lear puts it, 'tragedy plays a crucial role in legitimating tyranny'.[15] Halliwell disagrees, insisting that this passage merely makes the 'slightly casuistical point that … outright praise of tyranny is sometimes voiced in tragedy'.[16] But my question is, why include it at all? What is its function? It may well be that Plato's writing here (and in the depiction of tyranny throughout books VIII and IX) is coloured by his own experiences in Sicily,

15 Lear (1995), 71.

16 Halliwell (1995), 87, n. 2.

where Dionysius I was not only a sponsor and patron of tragedy, but also had aspirations as a dramatist himself.[17] But aside from historical considerations, the linking together of these themes suggests that tragedy has a part to play in the imaginative picture of the tyrannical constitution, both external and internal, that Socrates is building up, whilst at the same time hinting that the tragic poets' reputation for wisdom is not all that it seems. It also refers to the banishing of tragedy from the city, looking back to book III (394d) and forward to book X (595a, 607a–608b).

The figure of the tyrant 'haunts' the *Republic*, in Parry's apt formulation,[18] and is presented throughout as the anti-type of the just and happy man. From the moment when Thrasymachus hurls himself into the discussion like a wild beast (336b; cf. 336d, 341c, 358b) with his immoralist thesis that justice is the interest of the stronger, the tyrant is figured as a monstrous creature who blurs the boundaries between man and animal (565d–566a; 588b–589a). Thrasymachus himself uses tyranny 'the most consummate form of injustice' to prove that it pays to do wrong (344a–c), and his definition of tyranny as that which 'both by stealth and by force takes away what belongs to others, both sacred and profane, both private and public, not little by little but at one fell swoop' (344a7–9)[19] prefigures the description of tyrants and tyranny in books VIII and IX (562a–588a). The question of whether it profits a man to live in such a way is, of course, the central issue of the *Republic*, taken up by Glaucon in the story of Gyges' ring (359d–360b): if a man had complete license to do whatever he liked without detection, no-one, surely, would refrain from taking whatever he wanted, from breaking into people's houses and sleeping with anyone he fancied, from killing people and releasing criminals from prison, in short, from behaving among men as if he were a god (*isotheon*—the very word that Euripides uses in his alleged praise of tyranny at 568b3)? The challenge is to show that, even under such circumstances, it would be better to be just than unjust, that being good is always more profitable than seeming so (361a–d). Crucial to Socrates' response is the contention that injustice harms the soul of the perpetrator, as he goes on to exemplify in the case of the tyrant, the paradigm of the unjust man whose actions bring him nothing but misery (579d–580c, 587b–588a). Injustice, he argues, does not bring happiness, and the just man will

17 Monoson (2012). See also Morgan (2015), 119–120, 237–239.

18 Parry (2007), 394.

19 ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο τυραννίς, ἣ οὐ κατὰ σμικρὸν τἀλλότρια καὶ λάθραι καὶ βίαι ἀφαιρεῖται, καὶ ἱερὰ καὶ ὅσια καὶ ἴδια καὶ δημόσια, ἀλλὰ συλλήβδην. As Shorey points out ad loc., 'the order of words dramatically expresses Thrasymachus' excitement and the sweeping success of the tyrant'.

always be happier than the unjust for what matters is the state of the individual's soul. Hence the focus on psychology, which is reiterated towards the end of the dialogue, with a reference back to Glaucon's tale, when Socrates claims to have proved that 'justice in itself is the best thing for the soul itself, and that the soul ought to do justice whether it possesses the ring of Gyges or not' (612b). Contrary to the immoralist view, justice is its own reward.

The consequences of injustice are vividly illustrated in the psychological disintegration of the tyrant described in books VIII and IX. Returning from what he calls the digression on the tragic poets (568d3), Socrates continues his depiction of the downward spiral from democracy to tyranny, and then goes on to consider the quality of the tyrant's life (571ff.). He is a man whose soul is dominated by the lawless pleasures and appetites, which are present in every one of us (571b, 572b). Such lawless desires are awakened and revealed in sleep (571c, 572b), when, released from the control of reason, the bestial and savage part goes on the rampage. There is nothing it will not do, trying to have sex with a mother, or anything else that moves—man, god or beast; it is ready to slaughter anyone, no matter who the victim, and 'abstains from no food', a somewhat bizarre climax to this list of heinous crimes unless understood as a reference to eating human flesh. That motif recurs in relation to tyranny in the myth of Er in the description of the choosing of lives, where the soul to whom the first lot falls leaps forward to seize the greatest tyranny, not realising in his greed and folly that he will be condemned, amongst other horrors, to eat his own children (619b–c). That was the fate which befell the tragic figure of Thyestes, and it is not only Thyestes who comes to mind at this point. Indeed, as Thomas Gould observed, the list of criminal desires awakened in sleep 'is actually a list of the plots of some of the best-loved and most-admired tragedies',[20] as if to remind the reader of the resemblance between tragic poetry and the sinister desires that lie dormant in each one of us. When Socrates speaks of the dream of sex with a mother (571d1) who does not think of Oedipus? Oedipus' murder of his father, Orestes' matricide, Medea's killing of her children, Agave's slaughtering of her son: these are classic cases of 'pollution-causing murder' (*miaiphonein*, 571d3), to name only the most obvious examples of tragic plots which act out the monstrous deeds allegedly desired by the bestial part of the soul in sleep.

Although everyone is subject to these desires, in most people they can be controlled to a greater or lesser degree by strengthening the rational part of the soul and keeping the appetitive and thumoeidic parts in check. The tyrant

20 Gould (1990), 29–30, 215–216.

exemplifies the opposite case, for he is completely at the mercy of the master passion implanted in his soul by the tyrant-makers (572e) who realise that this is the only way they are going to be able to control *him*. This *erôs*, described as a monstrous winged drone protecting his prodigal appetites, is besieged by other unnecessary appetites which buzz about it, replete with incense, and myrrh, with garlands and wine and the pleasures released in such revelries—i.e. the pleasures of the symposium, which characterised the fevered or luxurious city (372e–373a). Poetry is not specifically mentioned here at 573a, but it must surely be included amongst the unnecessary sympotic pleasures. Fed by such appetites and goaded by the sting of longing the *erôs* in the tyrant's soul runs wild. Killing off any vestiges of opinions or appetites worth having, it drives him mad.[21] External and internal merge when the *erôs* introduced from the outside takes over the fortress within and itself becomes a tyrant, enslaving the tyrant's soul.

The motif of '*Erôs* as the tyrant within' (*Erôs turannos endon*, 573d cf. 573b, 574e), with its echoes of Euripidean tragedy (*Hipp*. 538, *Andromeda* fr. 136) is graphically illustrated by the behaviour of the tyrant, who spends his time on feasting and revelry, on banqueting and *hetairai* (573). The more he indulges his appetites and desires, the more they multiply. In his greed he will even steal from his parents, and for the sake of his latest *hetaira* he will beat up the mother who bore him (574b–c). The *hetaira*, it would seem, is an essential component in the tyrant's retinue (cf. 568e where he will use his father's estate to support his fellow symposiasts and his companions, both male and female).[22] Finally released from all restraints and tyrannised by lust the tyrant becomes in his waking state *all the time* (*aei* 574e3) what he once was occasionally (*oligakis*) in his dreams, refraining from no foul murder or food or deed (574e–575a), a restatment of 571c–d above. To sum up, says Socrates at 576b3–4, the worst type of man is he whose waking life is like the dreams we just discussed.

Thomas Gould was surely right to point to the affinity between the waking dreams of the tyrant and the myths that underpin so much of Greek tragedy, but surprisingly little attention has been paid to this insight. Parry, for example, makes no mention of any possible connection between tragedy and the tyrant's desires in the article I have already mentioned. What he does say, though, is this:

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21 Parry (2007) provides an excellent explication of this process. See also Scott (2007), 140–141 on *erôs*, *mania* and *hubris*.

22 συμπόται τε καὶ ἑταῖροι καὶ ἑταῖραι.

> Ordinary people, by definition, do not experience the type of tyrannical *erôs* that makes one mad. Rather, we must look to drama, film, and literature to find examples of character types defined by an all-powerful passion that is itself protected by grandiose delusions.

And he adds in a foot-note:

> It is also worth noting that these scenes from Socrates' narrative are strongly reminiscent of our contemporary portrayals of addiction, replete with erotic ecstasy, delusion, chaos and regret.[23]

What about such portrayals in *ancient* literature, particularly in tragedy, which specialises in depictions of irrational states? Parry does not explicitly acknowledge that tragedy might awaken and strengthen the unnecessary appetites that are present in everyone, but he comes close to making the connection when he discusses the tripartite image of the soul at 588c. The lowest part, the beast, has both tame and wild heads, and we have already been told that outlaw appetites, a kind of wild appetite, are innate.

> 'Perhaps', he says, 'we have here a faint trace of the idea that the soul has a wild, bacchic urge incommensurable with the rule of reason. Embodied, for instance, in the conflict between Dionysus and Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, the idea is a potent challenge to the project of the *Republic*'.[24]

Tragedy does indeed embody the dangers of wild and uncontrollable emotions, with *erôs* amongst the most destructive of all. Not only is erotic passion a source of disruption and chaos in itself, but violence, madness and bloody deeds are often eroticised in the language of tragedy, as Chiara Thumiger has shown in her study of these themes.[25] Given the paramount importance of culture on the formation of character, and Socrates' explicit statement at 559b that the unnecessary appetites can be eliminated in most people if they are disciplined and educated (*paideuomenê*) from an early age, is it surprising that he should want to exclude tragedy, which allegedly fosters and even embodies those appetites?

Although poetry is not explicitly discussed in the central books of the *Republic*, the poets are not forgotten, as an examination of the apparently casual

23 Parry (2007), 398 with n. 11.
24 Parry (2007), 412.
25 Thumiger (2013).

remarks on their association with tyrants shows. Again, when the question is raised as to how the ideal state of the *Republic* will deteriorate (545d–e) Socrates invokes the Muses, like Homer, to tell them how dissension (*stasis*) first arose. That appeal (ironical though it may be) alerts us to the difficulty of the question posed (if the ideal state is ideal, how will it decline?), but it also, of course, brings poetry into the frame. In their imagined reply, the Muses explain (if that is the right word for the mystifying mathematical disquisition that follows, 546b–d) that the rulers, being human, will eventually make mistakes in their calculations about the mating arrangements for their class so that their offspring will begin to deteriorate in quality, and the disintegration will begin. The decline of Callipolis, though not strictly speaking a myth, is nevertheless a quasi-mythological account of a fall from perfection which has no rational explanation. As Malcolm Schofield has put it:

> The iterated appeals to the Muses, the mystery woven around the mathematics of the nuptial number, the explicit indication that there is a degree of playfulness in it all: in combination these things suggest a delicate appeal to the *reader's* imagination—intimating the complex of factors which would inevitably produce something as contingent as the breakdown of the *politeia* of a city, but could never be the subject of philosophical or scientific demonstration.[26]

Like all Plato's myths it is full of poetic material and traditional motifs, beginning with the Homeric invocation of the Muses and their allusion to Hesiod's races of gold, silver, bronze and iron in the prelude to the story, which Socrates takes over at 547c.[27] What strikes me about that story is that it incorporates, or even acts out, the themes of poetry that Socrates himself would ban from the ideal state.

The Muses are imagined as speaking *tragikôs*, 'in tragic fashion' (545e), and the decline begins with a miscalculation or mistake, (a *hamartia*?) on the part of the rulers. The consequence of this initial mistake, we are told (546d–e), is that the offspring born from unseasonal unions will 'pay too little heed to *mousikê* … so that they will become *amousoteroi*'. It is as though the failure to adhere to the programme of *mousikê* outlined in books II and III (and to the philosophical training consequent upon that initial process of habituation) will result in the enactment of the very tragedy that the revision of traditional

26 Schofield (2009), 109.

27 See Van Noorden (2015), 89–99.

mythology is designed to avoid. Poetic imagery and tragic themes, notably that of conflict within the family, are prominent in the story of the city's degeneration, as I have discussed elsewhere.[28] And the connection between tragedy and the final stages of the city's ruin is made explicit in the image of the tyrant. This most monstrous of creatures will not shrink from striking his parents and killing his kinsmen in his lust for power, and, despite appearances to the contrary, he is the most wretched of men. In a telling passage at 577a–b Socrates says that in order to see what the tyrant is really like we should look below the surface and not be over-awed, like children, by the pomp and circumstance of the tyrant's life. He should be seen in his own home and with his own family, the best place to catch him 'stripped of his tragic garb'.[29] The man who has seen him as he really is should be asked to report (*exaggelein*—as in a messenger speech perhaps?) on whether the tyrant is happy or miserable. It is striking that this image of stripping off the outer layers to reveal the inner reality is later used of poetry when Socrates says at 601b2–4:

> when the works of the poets are stripped (*gumnôthenta*) of the colours of music and spoken alone by themselves, I think you know how they appear. Their true nature is revealed, like the faces of those from whom the bloom of youth has faded.

In the case of the tyrant his true nature can only be revealed by stripping him of his tragic garb, words which suggest that the image of the tyrant is itself a theatrical, not to say, tragic image. Like an actor on the stage the tyrant is not what he seems; for despite his apparent happiness and wealth, he is in reality the most miserable of men on earth.

The contrast between inner and outer, between appearance and reality, is a theme to which Socrates returns with his image of the soul as part many-headed beast, part lion and part man, enclosed within the outer casing of a man (588b–e).[30] Anyone who cannot see inside that coating (the same motif as is used of the tyrant at 577a) will see a single entity, a human-being, unaware of the warring creatures that lie beneath the outward form. Consequently anyone who says that injustice pays cannot possibly understand the true effects of wrong-doing on the state of the soul. For that is tantamount to saying that it

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28 Murray (2011), especially 189–193.

29 γυμνὸς … τῆς τραγικῆς σκευῆς.

30 The implications of the comparison are reversed in the image of Socrates as Silenus where the contrast is between outer ugliness and inner beauty. See further Belfiore in this volume, p. 40, and Ford, pp. 14–15 and 23.

would benefit a man to feast[31] and strengthen the multifarious beast, together with the lion and all that pertains to it, whilst starving the man so that the better part of the soul would be dominated by the creatures that 'bite and fight and devour each other' (589a3–4). When the most divine part of a man is thus enslaved to the brutish, how could he not be wretched (589d–590a)?

From this psychological perspective the crucial significance of the tyrant figure lies not so much in the power the tyrant has over others as in the lack of power he has over himself. Enslaved as he is by '*erôs* the tyrant within' (and he is also literally imprisoned, cowering like a woman in the innermost recesses of his house, 579b), he is the exemplification of the wrongly constituted soul whose fate the wise man, the true *mousikos* (591d3–4), will do all he can to avoid.[32] The constitution of the soul is the theme which connects the story of decline in books VIII and IX with the return to the subject of poetry in book X, which focuses on the power of poetry to corrupt the minds 'of all listeners who do not possess a knowledge of its real nature', as Socrates says at 595b. Whatever reluctance he may express about banishing the tragic poets and their master, Homer, in the opening and closing sections of his critique (595a–c, 607b–608c) the overwhelming emphasis is on safe-guarding the soul against the corrosive effects of poetry, summarised in the passage at 606d that I have already quoted:

> in regard to the emotions of sex and anger, and all the appetites and pains and pleasures of the soul which we say accompany all our actions, the effect of poetic imitation is the same. For it waters and fosters these feelings when what we ought to do is to dry them up, and it establishes them as our rulers when they ought to be ruled, to the end that we may be better and happier men instead of worse and more miserable.

In stirring up the emotional and appetitive parts of the soul, poetry endangers its very constitution, and this is where the affinity between poetry and tyranny resides: through the image of the tyrant Socrates exemplifies the state of the soul that poetry threatens to produce.

The implications of the imagery of tyranny and its relevance for poetry have been well explored by Jonathan Lear who connects book IX's emphasis on the appetites very closely with the expulsion of poetry in book X.

31 εὐωχοῦντι at 588e6 recalls the profligate feasting of the tyrant.

32 On what it would mean to be a true *mousikos* see Gonzalez in this volume, pp. 51–52.

> The important thing for Plato is not to get the poets out of the polis, so much as to get the appetites out of culture, and … this provides one of the deeper reasons why book 10 comes where it does. It is not just that it has to follow the entire psychology and metaphysics of the *Republic* but that it has to follow book 9.[33]

Halliwell takes a different view, objecting that the 'destructive cravings of the imagination's dream-world' which characterise both poet and tyrant in book IX are nowhere to be seen in book X. Instead, Socrates' critique focuses on the capacity of poetry to arouse our pity and compassion. In Halliwell's words,

> the kernel of tragedy is located in the dramatisation of acute suffering, and its effect upon an audience is analysed wholly in terms of the arousal of intense "sympathy" … what is repudiated by Plato is tragedy's unregenerate attachment to embodied human value—the very opposite, in other words, of irrational destructiveness … It is the psyche's addiction to pity that Plato rightly recognises as grounding the Greek tragic tradition. And it is this addiction, not the very different impulses that break out within the monstrous life of the tyrannical soul, that forms both the psychological and the cultural nub of Plato's objections to tragedy.[34]

It is true that there is little discussion of sex, violence and the hubristic behaviour characteristic of Plato's tragic tyrant in the critique of poetry in *Republic* X,[35] but those destructive impulses are by no means irrelevant to the analysis of poetry's effect on the constitution of the soul. When Socrates justifies the banning of mimetic poetry at 605b he does so on the grounds that it 'awakens' and nourishes the inferior part of the soul, strengthening it to the detriment of the rational part. That metaphor of 'awakening'[36] reminds us of the savage desires, awakened in sleep, that are present in each one of us (572b3–4, cf. 571b) and embodied in the plots of Greek tragedy no less than in the soul of the tyrant dominated by *erôs*. The gravest charge against poetry, and indeed the reason for its banishment, is its power to corrupt the soul (605c5–7). The process whereby

33 Lear (1992), 214.

34 Halliwell (1995), 87–88. See also Halliwell 1984 and (2002), 112–113.

35 See Burnyeat (1999) 250 on the comparative lack of concern with the modern preoccupations of sex and violence.

36 ἐγείρει at 605b2, ἐγειρομένας at 571c3, as noted by Gould (1990), 30. Halliwell (1995), 87 n. 4 objects that Gould places too much weight on the repeated imagery of 'waking' the desires, to which I can only reply, 'No, he doesn't'.

that happens is illustrated by the example of pity (605c–606c): we respond in sympathy to the lamentations of tragic heroes, whether in Homer or on the stage, and enjoy doing so because they tap into, and feed, a part of the soul that by its very nature hungers for tears (606a4–6). In other words, imitative poetry activates a desire that is already present in the soul, even if normally suppressed. But the damage that poetry can inflict is not confined to the arousal of pity, rather it extends to *all* the appetites (606d, quoted above), and, as we have just been reminded, those appetites lie dormant in each one of us, waiting to be watered and fed by whatever role models the poets set before us. Whether it be grief, lust or murderous rage, the mechanism will be the same, and the effect in each case will be to loosen the control of reason and enslave us to the appetites. Thus, whilst the *analysis* centres on sympathy and pity, the imagery suggests a more sinister view of poetry's destructive power.

If pity is at the centre of the critique in book x, that may be because the focus has shifted from tragedy to Homer. Tragedy is the link between the story of the city's decline and the return to the subject of poetry at the beginning of book x, as is evident from the fact that the tragic poets are mentioned first: they were right to have banished imitative poetry because of its corrupting effect on the soul, says Socrates at 595b3–4, but please 'don't betray me to the tragic poets and other imitators'. It is only after this that Homer is brought in as their original master and leader (595c), and Homer then remains at the centre of the critique, both in his own right and as the first of the tragedians (598d8, 605c11, 607a2–3). So book x is primarily concerned with what Homer and tragedy have in common, that is a tragic view of life which places human suffering at its centre. But what about all those tragic plots and mythological themes which do not feature in Homer? Chief amongst these are the themes of family strife and kin-killing,[37] which are dramatised in the portrayal of the tyrant in book ix. No explicit connection is made between that picture of psychological disintegration and the pernicious effects of poetry upon the soul, but the signs are there for us to read, if we choose to do so.

Taken in isolation book x might perhaps lead us to conclude that the terrible damage inflicted by poetry results primarily from its encouragement of an addiction to pity and all that that entails. But read in the context of the *Republic* as a whole, this final book looks back over the entire work in ways which suggest a more complex view of its insidious appeal. When, in the closing words of his critique, Socrates speaks of his *erôs* for Homer and the poetry of

37 For the typical characteristics of the tragic tyrant see Seaford (2003), and especially 95–96 on the absence of such themes from Homer.

pleasure, a passion implanted in him by the culture in which he has grown up (607c–608), we are reminded of the connection between poetry and the appetites. The desire for lamentation, the hunger for tears, may be an appetite, but it is not the only one associated with poetry, as the imagery of book IX so graphically implies. How much weight we place on that imagery is in the end up to us as individual readers, but if we focus exclusively on the arguments and fail to explore the implications of the figurative language that characterises so much of Plato's writing, our reading will be the poorer. In this case the correspondences are not precise, but in my view the network of imagery and verbal echoes which bind together the themes of poetry, tyranny and desire can only strengthen the argument for excluding the sweetened Muse of poetry from Plato's *Republic*.

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The Tripartite Soul as Metaphor*

Douglas Cairns

This paper deals with the role of metaphor in the *Republic*'s presentation of the tripartite soul, and in particular with the ways in which that construct is deployed in Books VIII and IX. As is well known, Book IX ends with an image, an '*eikôn* of the *psuchê* in speech' (IX, 588b10), which presents the *psuchê* as a triform creature—a human being, a lion, and a many-headed beast, with the outward appearance of a human being (588b10–e2). This image, which we shall treat in detail below, comes at the end of a lengthy discussion, in Books VIII and IX, which is similarly rich in imagery. That discussion thus culminates in an explicit statement of Plato's sense of the importance of image-making: Plato chooses to use an *eikôn* to sum up the entire argument for the intrinsic benefits of justice which begins in Book II and reaches its conclusion in this passage;[1] and that *eikôn* serves as a paradigm to emphasize the centrality of the main argument's underpinnings in the psychology of tripartition. The *eikôn*, the image, of Book IX is clearly powerful in itself: its location and function in the argument make this apparent. But that image also underlines the importance (and thus the power) of imagery in the representation of the tripartite soul throughout the dialogue. The tripartite *psuchê* is just one of the contexts in which the *Republic*'s pervasive use of images manifests itself. But the centrality of image-making to that account and the centrality of that account to the dialogue's ethical and political argument are such that an analysis of the status and function of the images of tripartition is an essential part of any exploration of the power of the *Republic*'s imagery. Accordingly, though I concentrate on the issue of what the use of imagery contributes to the presentation of the tripartite soul in the *Republic* (and especially in Books VIII and IX), I assume throughout

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1 See below (n. 3).

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readers' acceptance of the obvious truth that the tripartite soul plays a crucial role in the dialogue's argumentation, and therefore advance the argument that a demonstration of the power of imagery in the presentation of the tripartite soul may serve as a contribution to the study of the power of imagery in the *Republic* and in Plato's way of composing philosophical dialogues more generally.

The *eikôn* that concludes Book IX is, as noted, explicitly framed as providing an answer to the challenge first posed in Book II, concerning the intrinsic superiority of justice over injustice.[2] It rehearses, in a nutshell, the representation of the deviant character types—especially that of the tyrant—that occupies Books VIII and IX. That account depends closely on the potential for conflict between the various forms of motivation which have their sources in the three elements of the *psuchê*. Plato thus acknowledges the power in the argument of the dialogue not only of this image *of* the tripartite *psuchê*, but also of the tripartite *psuchê* itself *as an image*. In the basic sense in which I want to use the term in this chapter, both these images involve metaphor, the figure of thought that consists in thinking about one domain in terms of another.[3] At the risk of stating the obvious, what Plato explicitly identifies as an image (*eikôn*) involves precisely what we in English describe as imagery, and in particular that variety of imagery that we call metaphor. To think and talk about the *psuchê* as a composite creature consisting of a person, a lion, and a many-headed beast is to transfer to a target domain (that of the *psuchê*) features that belong to the source domains of human and animal agency (as well as features of other domains too, as we shall see). The construction of the *eikôn* of Book IX thus involves a mechanism of thought, metaphor, that has been operative in the discussion of the tripartite soul from the outset. We do not know for sure whether Plato would have regarded all the forms of metaphor deployed in that discussion as *eikones*, but whether he did or not, it remains true (a) that the image of the tripartite soul that he does explicitly label an *eikôn* is constructed using the mechanism of metaphor, (b) that the same mechanism is used repeatedly in the discussion of the tripartite soul wherever it occurs in the dialogue, and (c) that this mechanism is one that we typically classify in English as a species

2 See *Republic* IX, 588b1–4:

'Well then,' I said, 'since we have reached this point in the argument, let us return to what was said at the beginning, which was the reason for our coming this far. The assertion was, I think, that it was advantageous to act unjustly, if a person could be completely unjust while enjoying a reputation for justice. Wasn't that what was said?'

3 Lakoff and Johnson (1980), supplemented by Lakoff and Turner (1989), Lakoff and Johnson (1999).

of imagery. In talking about the power of metaphor in the construction of the tripartite soul, I am therefore talking about the power of images.

The argument of this chapter will be (a) that metaphor, in this basic sense of mapping from one domain to another (typically from a more concrete and experiential domain to one that is more abstract and less directly accessible to empirical investigation), is constitutive of the tripartite *psuchê* in the *Republic*; (b) that Plato is fully aware of and entirely comfortable with this—that this is a concept that Plato clearly and deliberately chooses to express in metaphorical terms; and (c) that there is, at least in the dialogue as we have it, no non-metaphorical way of expressing that concept. For the purposes of the dialogue's argument, then, the tripartite *psuchê*, metaphorically constructed as it is, functions as an epistemic or conceptual metaphor.[4] A deeper reason for the absence of non-metaphorical accounts of *psuchê*, however, a reason that Plato himself would most likely not have accepted, is that the very concept of *psuchê* is itself fundamentally metaphorical. The *Republic*, as a matter of fact, attributes no capacity or quality to the *psuchê* that does not derive from some other domain of experience; but in even making use of the notion of *psuchê* Plato is deploying a concept that similarly derives its qualities from other, more immediate and more concrete, domains of experience. Plato thus deploys metaphor to think about a concept that is already metaphorical.

Plato's *explanandum* (the tenor of the metaphor) is the behaviour of persons; the *explanans* (the vehicle) is the model of the tripartite *psuchê*. But this involves several levels of metaphor. In particular, the capacities and qualities of persons (the tenor or *explanandum*) are attributed not only to the three entities ('parts', 'kinds', 'types'—*merê, genê*, or *eidê*) that together constitute the model (*explanans*, vehicle) but also (at a higher level) to the *psuchê* as a whole and (at a lower) to the desires and motives of the 'parts', 'kinds', or 'types'. In all of this, Plato takes the basic, background conceptual metaphor (that there is an entity within persons, the *psuchê*, that, among other things, explains the motivation of persons) and blends it with a number of further metaphorical elaborations, some of which have their origins in popular conceptions and some of which depend on the particular forms of thought and argument that are deployed in the *Republic*. Throughout, not only is the status of the actual person as the only real agent never lost sight of, but that status is repeatedly reinforced by the phenomenon of 'intrusion',[5] by virtue of which the tenor or *explanandum*, the actual person, interacts in various ways with the different elements of the vehicle or *explanans*.

4 For the former term, see Pender (2000); for the latter, Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

5 A recurrent feature of poetic imagery: see Silk (1974) 138–149.

That Plato's account of the tripartite *psuchê* in the *Republic* relies heavily on metaphor is widely, though not universally, accepted. But attempts to deny that this is so themselves resort to metaphor and in effect corroborate its use in the dialogue. Christopher Bobonich, for example, talks about a theory that involves 'agent-like parts'.[6] But since it is not an empirically verifiable fact that our motivations are actually persons or parts, any model in which they are inevitably depends on the application to psychological motivation of characteristics drawn from other domains of experience. This, the mapping from one domain to another, is what metaphor is, what metaphor does. A theory of 'agent-like parts' entails an acceptance of Plato's use of personification and reification, two basic forms of ontological metaphor.[7] On the whole, however, it is better to understand the metaphors that Plato actually uses than to replace them with metaphors of our own or to privilege one set of Platonic metaphors over others. This is important, because it seems to me that the status of the model of the tripartite *psuchê* as metaphor is not always as well understood as it might be, either in its detail or in its implications. A full account of the model's metaphorical status would need to consider all its manifestations, throughout the books of the *Republic* in which it appears. Such an account cannot be attempted here.[8] My aim instead is to make a start on the project, focusing especially on *Republic* VIII–IX.[9]

It is often noted that personification is just one of the types of metaphor that Plato uses in talking about the *psuchê*.[10] Reification also plays a major role, not just in the occasional references to *merê*, parts, but also in the presentation of these parts as (e.g.) metals to be tempered or plants to be cultivated or curbed. We shall see some of that range in this chapter, but, again, a full analysis

6 Bobonich (2002), especially 219–223 (a non-metaphorical theory of agent-like parts). For Barney, Brennan, and Brittain (2012) 2–3, introducing their collection on the divided soul in Plato, there is 'a growing consensus' that the 'parts of the soul' 'are robustly agent-like individuals ... For each seems to comprise an integrated system of capacities for cognition, volition, affect, and agency ...' They recognize that the model of the tripartite soul is permeated by metaphor, yet hold that this 'suggests that we are to understand the parts as real agents'. Of their contributors, only Kamtekar (2012) and Whiting (2012) resist this approach.

7 See, once more, the classic account of Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

8 For a fuller attempt, focusing on other parts of the *Republic* and in the context of a comparison between Homeric and Platonic accounts of the soul, see Cairns (2014). See also Renaut in this volume.

9 On the proliferation of metaphorical representations of the *psuchê*, and especially of personification, in Books VIII–IX, cf. Price (1995) 56, Petraki (2011) 11 (cf. 14, 22).

10 See Kamtekar (2006) 178 = (2012) 84, Schofield (2006) 271, and Stalley (2007) 76–78, 84–87.

would take detailed account of the entire range of types of metaphor used. In scholarly discussion, however, the issue is typically couched purely in terms of the distinction between personification and reification and their respective implications. But since most accounts agree that the three elements of the tripartite model are, at least to some extent, credited with a degree of agency, it seems that no account can dispense altogether with personification. That being so, where personification is in question, the issue is typically (a) whether the personified entities do or do not duplicate the capacities of the whole person;[11] or (b) of identifying the faculties that the 'parts of the soul' really represent or the capacities that they can really be said to have.[12] There are thus maximal and minimal approaches to the agency of the three psychic *eidê*. Much of this depends heavily on the initial presentation of the model in Book 4, where some of the language suggests that the motivation of the individual is simply a matter of interaction between the *eidê* of the *psuchê* as centres of agency.[13] So the focus in the scholarship is typically on forms of personification in which the three psychic *eidê* interact with each other. A basic point to be made, then, is that this approach overlooks the sheer variety of forms of interaction that one finds in Books VIII–IX.

That discussion uses the model of the tripartite soul to explain how the type of character a person has is the product of various ways of developing the overall goals and motivations that are (by that stage in the discussion) associated with the three elements of the soul. There are four distinct character types corresponding to the four types of deviant constitution; at both levels—that of regime change and that of personality development—the focus is on individuals, their motives, and their interactions with each other. At the same time, however, the exploration of individual character also operates at the intrapersonal level. Yet the imagery in which this is developed is not simply that of the interaction of the three personified psychic *eidê*; it includes also imagery of a person's interaction with those *eidê*, as well as of the interaction of a person with his or her own personified desires, and of the desires with each other, as if they were persons. Not only that, but, throughout the discussion, individuals, their desires, and the elements of the soul into which those desires might be grouped are all presented as subject to the external influence of other

11 For the issues, see especially Moline (1978), Annas (1981) 131, 142–146, Cooper (1984), Irwin (1995) 216–222, and Bobonich (2002) 221–223, 248–257.

12 See e.g. Lorenz (2006) 2, 16, 34, 48–49 (together with his literalist understanding of partition, p. 10), Moss (2008); cf. Kahn (2004) 356. For pertinent arguments against this approach, see Bobonich (2010) 150–153, 158–159.

13 Cf. Schofield (2006) 254–255, 276 n. 12.

people. It is not just that interpersonal and intrapersonal dialogue are part of the picture;[14] these two levels also overlap and interact: real individuals engage in interpersonal communication; real individuals engage with aspects of their own and others' *psuchai* (as if they were persons); and the aspects of the *psuchê* themselves interact as if they were persons.

Let us start with the timocratic character. The emphasis here is mainly on individual behaviour and the influence of the social environment: the timocratic character is both a cause and an effect of the shift from aristocratic to timocratic society, and so there is substantial overlap between the descriptions of each (545c7–550b7). In the development of the timocratic individual there is stress on the influence of other people, especially the youth's mother and servants: 'It starts when [the youth] hears his mother complaining that her husband is not one of the rulers, and that she is disadvantaged on that account among the other women … The servants of such men sometimes say the same sort of thing *sotto voce* to their sons … He hears and sees other things of the same sort when he goes out …' (*Rep.* VIII, 549c8–550a2). This is the literal level of real interpersonal interaction. But, inevitably, there is also psychological imagery. The timocratic youth will be abandoned by 'the best guardian', namely 'reason mixed with *mousikê*, the sole saviour of *aretê* in a person in whom she dwells throughout his life' (549b3–4, 6–7): the agents involved in this image are the person and one of the three elements of the tripartite soul. The youth's father waters and fosters the *logistikon* in his *psuchê*, but others his *epithumêtikon* and *thumoeides* (550b1–3): external influence on the individual can be spoken of as external influence on the *eidê* of the individual's soul, in an image in which the father becomes a farmer or gardener and his son's soul a plant. At the same time, however, external influence on the individual is also a matter of the individual himself 'handing over command within himself to the middle element, that which is victory-loving and *thumoeides*' (550b5–7). Here it is not the *eidê* which interact with each other, but people (i.e. real, flesh-and-blood people, both the individual himself and others) who interact with the individual's *eidê*, personified as agents or reified as plants.

In the transition from the timocratic to the oligarchic character, too, we start at the everyday, literal level of interpersonal interaction—between the child and his father (553a9–b5). But the change is soon represented as a matter of the individual's relations with the three personified aspects of the *psuchê*: the son ejects the *thumoeides* from its throne in his *psuchê* and makes his *logistikon* and his *thumoeides* sit on the ground at the feet of its money-making element

14 Cf. Gill (1996) 256–257.

(553b8–d2).[15] Since, however, the *epithumêtikon* is itself heterogeneous (cf. *Rep.* IX, 580d10–e1), the person's relationship with his *epithumêtikon* can also be expressed as a relationship between him and his personified desires (554a7–8, 554c12–d1, 555a4).[16] In interacting with his own desires in this fashion, the son is at the same time reflecting the influence of his social environment—his desires are the result of *apaideusia* (554b7–c1). Other people's influence on us can thus be represented as an influence, through us, on our desires, personified as agents: again the levels of interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction are blurred. Some of these personified desires, however, are restrained—not only by the individual himself, but also by other desires: 'Then such a person would not be free from faction (*stasis*) within himself, nor is he one person, but two, though for the most part he'd keep his better desires in control of the worse ones' (554d9–e2).[17] In an overall image of political strife, two factions of personified desires are in opposition. One controls another, but the person remains able to exert some kind of executive control over both factions. Again, the supposedly dominant model of communication or interaction between the three personified psychic agents that make up the tripartite soul is not an explicit part of this imagery at all.

The next stage, from oligarchic to democratic character, follows the same pattern: influences on the formation of character are first described in external, literal, interpersonal terms (558c10–d1),[18] before the focus immediately shifts to the individual's control of his personified desires (558d4–6)[19] and the general issue of what kinds of desire 'we' as individuals are in principle able to control or steer in a positive direction (558d8–559c12).[20] The discussion of the devel-

15 ὠθεῖ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῇ ... τὸ θυμοειδές (553b8–c1); τὸ δέ γε ... λογιστικόν τε καὶ θυμοειδὲς χαμαὶ ... παρακαθίσας (553d1–2).

16 'Enslaving the other desires, on the basis that they are irrelevant' (δουλούμενος τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας ὡς ματαίους, 554a7–8); 'by virtue of some decent element in himself he forcibly restrains other wicked desires that are in him' (ἐπιεικεῖ τινὶ ἑαυτοῦ βίᾳ κατέχει ἄλλας κακὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἐνούσας, 554c12–d1); 'afraid of awakening the desires that would lead to spending money' (δεδιὼς τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τὰς ἀναλωτικὰς ἐγείρειν ..., 555a4).

17 οὐκ ἄρ' ἂν εἴη ἀστασίαστος ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὐδὲ εἷς ἀλλὰ διπλοῦς τις, ἐπιθυμίας δὲ ἐπιθυμιῶν ὡς τὸ πολὺ κρατούσας ἂν ἔχοι βελτίους χειρόνων.

18 'Isn't this the way of it? A son of that penny-pinching and oligarchic type would, I suppose, be brought up by his father in his own customs?' (ἆρ' οὖν οὐχ ὧδε; τοῦ φειδωλοῦ ἐκείνου καὶ ὀλιγαρχικοῦ γένοιτ' ἂν οἶμαι ὑὸς ὑπὸ τῷ πατρὶ τεθραμμένος ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνου ἤθεσι;).

19 'So he too would rule by force the desires in him, the ones that are for spending money, not the ones for making it—the ones that are called unnecessary' (βίᾳ δὴ καὶ οὗτος ἄρχων τῶν ἐν αὑτῷ ἡδονῶν, ὅσαι ἀναλωτικαὶ μέν, χρηματιστικαὶ δὲ μή· αἳ δὴ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖαι κέκληνται).

20 'Wouldn't the ones we'd be incapable of turning aside, and those whose fulfilment benefits

opment of the democratic character then resumes. External influence on the individual is now presented as a matter not just of interaction between other people and his (personified) desires ('if reinforcements arrive from his relatives to assist the thrifty element, *to pheidôlon*, of his *psuchê*', 560c7–8),[21] but also of the influence of others' personified desires on his ('so the youth changes when a kindred and similar type [*eidos*] of desires comes from outside to bring aid to its counterpart in him', 559e5–7).[22] The effect on the individual is one of internal *stasis*, civil war—not between individual desires, but between factions of desires, expressed using the locutions *to dêmokratikon* and *to oligarchikon* or *to pheidôlon* (559e10–560a7, c8), and described using extravagant political imagery (560c7–561a1)[23] that draws freely not only on the experience of *stasis* in the Athenians' historical memory but also on Thucydides' literary account of that phenomenon at III. 82, revaluation of ethical vocabulary included. We learn at *Rep.* IX, 580d8 ff. that each *eidos* of the tripartite soul has, as a person might, its own pleasure and its own type of desire; in our passage there is a further subdivision of two categories of desire as political factions within the community of desires that is the *epithumêtikon*. No doubt there are ways of thinking about this that preserve Book IV's Principle of Opposites—one might say, for example, that these factions conflict contingently rather than in terms of their intrinsic nature; but equally it is not hard to construct scenarios in which the Principle of Opposites could be used to show precisely the opposite—that since *to epithumêtikon* can (for example) simultaneously entertain a positive impulse to spend money and a negative impulse not to spend it then there must be at least two agents in the *epithumêtikon*.[24] But this is not the point in the passage in question. The point is rather that, as a result of other people's influence and the way we live our own lives there can arise conflicts between our desires, conflicts that can be presented as occurring between types or kinds of desire—types that Plato is prepared to call *eidê* in the same way as he calls the so-called 'parts of the soul' *eidê* and which he is prepared to personify in just the way that he personifies the 'parts of the soul'. The imagery of

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us, rightly be called necessary?' (οὐκοῦν ἅς τε οὐκ ἂν οἷοί τ' εἶμεν ἀποτρέψαι, δικαίως ἂν ἀναγκαῖαι καλοῖντο καὶ ὅσαι ἀποτελούμεναι ὠφελοῦσιν ἡμᾶς; 558d9–e2); etc.

21 ἐὰν παρ' οἰκείων τις βοήθεια τῷ φειδωλῷ αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀφικνῆται.

22 οὕτω καὶ ὁ νεανίας μεταβάλλει βοηθοῦντος αὖ εἴδους ἐπιθυμιῶν ἔξωθεν τῷ ἑτέρῳ τῶν παρ' ἐκείνῳ, συγγενοῦς τε καὶ ὁμοίου;

23 Note the vividly personified abstractions in locutions such as 560e2–4: 'then after that they bring home from exile *hubris, anarchia, asôtia* (prodigality), and *anaideia* (impudence), garlanded and conspicuously attended by a great chorus'.

24 Cf. e.g. Brown (2012) 62 n. 24, Whiting (2012) 179, 186.

conflict between *to dêmokratikon* and *to oligarchikon* is an ad hoc version of the strategy that is employed in the personification of *logistikon, thumoeides*, and *epithumêtikon*.

The account of the democratic character then draws to a close with a return to the level of the individual and his interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships—democratic man's dialogue with other individuals over the desirability of various pleasures is simultaneously a matter of his admitting or not admitting various desires to his inner *phrourion* (garrison), or failing to understand which desires to honour and which to enslave (561b8–c3).[25] The behaviour of a real individual within a community is explained in terms of the behaviour of personified aspects of his personality as if they were members of a community.

The account of the tyrannical personality follows a similar pattern. It begins with general remarks on individuals' varying abilities to control those desires which are *paranomoi*, illicit (*Rep*. IX, 571b3–d5): everybody has these, but they are normally checked (*kolazomenai*, as if they were plants, animals, or people) by the laws and by the alliance of 'the better desires' with *logos* (571b4–6). We interact with our inner psychic agents, and they interact with each other. This is an enterprise in which we, as individuals, may succeed or fail—with the implication that it is to our credit or discredit, and therefore up to us, which we do. But this interaction between a person and his or her personified desires can also be expressed in terms of interaction between a person and the personified *eidê* of his/her soul: a person who wants to guard against the illicit passions that arise when the *logistikon* is asleep and the 'bestial, wild element' (τὸ … θηριῶδές τε καὶ ἄγριον) comes out to play (571c3–7) will nurture his *logistikon* and keep it awake, while ensuring that the *epithumêtikon* is neither too satiated nor too hungry to get to sleep, and soothing the *thumoeides* so that the person is not disturbed by anger as he or she tries to drop off:

> But when, I imagine, someone keeps himself in a healthy and sober condition and goes to sleep after waking his *logistikon* and feasting it on fine arguments and inquiries, having reached a state of reflexive meditation, without either starving or over-indulging the *epithumêtikon*, that it might

25 'And he does not accept or admit into the garrison true argument, if someone says that some pleasures belong to admirable and good desires and others to wicked ones, and that one must practise and honour the former while checking and enslaving the latter' (καὶ λόγον γε … ἀληθῆ οὐ προσδεχόμενος οὐδὲ παριεὶς εἰς τὸ φρούριον, ἐάν τις λέγῃ ὡς αἱ μέν εἰσι τῶν καλῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ἡδοναί, αἱ δὲ τῶν πονηρῶν, καὶ τὰς μὲν χρὴ ἐπιτηδεύειν καὶ τιμᾶν, τὰς δὲ κολάζειν τε καὶ δουλοῦσθαι).

> go to sleep and not cause a nuisance to the best element by rejoicing or lamenting, but rather allow it, alone, by itself, and untainted, to examine and reach out towards the perception of what it does not know, whether past, present, or future; and after also calming the *thumoeides* in the same way, does not go to sleep after getting angry with people and arousing his *thumos*, but having quietened two of the *eidê* and aroused the third, in which intelligence arises, and so takes his rest, you know that he makes most contact with the truth in such a state and the visions of his dreams appear in their least lawless guise.[26]
>
> *Rep.* IX, 571d7–572a9

Here two of the *eidê* do interact as personified agents: the *epithumêtikon* is capable of 'causing a nuisance to the best element by rejoicing or lamenting' (571e2–3); but this happens only if we, actual human agents, are not careful to prevent it. This is precisely what the tyrant does not do. Bad influences establish *erôs* as the champion of his other desires; *erôs* kills or exiles any opinions or desires that manifest any shred of goodness or shame and, with his bodyguard of illicit nocturnal desires, enslaves both the tyrant's boyhood beliefs (*doxai*, 574d5) about right and wrong and the tyrant himself (572d9–575a7). Again, the dominant imagery is of the agent's interaction with his personified desires and the personified desires' (and in this case also the opinions') interactions with each other.

The pattern in each of these sketches is similar: as a result of growing up in a particular social and political environment, of their relations with their parents, and of the influence of others, each character type develops a particular relationship to his desires and a particular constitution of the *psuchê*. Imagery, especially personification, is crucial in this argument; but the purpose of that imagery is to provide arguments that will appeal to and persuade real human agents. The whole point of the analysis of the deviant constitutions and deviant types of person is to present an account of the kind of person that *we as*

26 ὅταν δέ γε οἶμαι ὑγιεινῶς τις ἔχῃ αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ καὶ σωφρόνως, καὶ εἰς τὸν ὕπνον ἴῃ τὸ λογιστικὸν μὲν ἐγείρας ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἑστιάσας λόγων καλῶν καὶ σκέψεων, εἰς σύννοιαν αὐτὸς αὑτῷ ἀφικόμενος, τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν δὲ μήτε ἐνδείᾳ δοὺς μήτε πλησμονῇ, ὅπως ἂν κοιμηθῇ καὶ μὴ παρέχῃ θόρυβον τῷ βελτίστῳ χαῖρον ἢ λυπούμενον, ἀλλ' ἐᾷ αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ μόνον καθαρὸν σκοπεῖν καὶ ὀρέγεσθαί του αἰσθάνεσθαι ὃ μὴ οἶδεν, ἤ τι τῶν γεγονότων ἢ ὄντων ἢ καὶ μελλόντων, ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς πραΰνας καὶ μή τισιν εἰς ὀργὰς ἐλθὼν κεκινημένῳ τῷ θυμῷ καθεύδῃ, ἀλλ' ἡσυχάσας μὲν τὼ δύο εἴδη, τὸ τρίτον δὲ κινήσας ἐν ᾧ τὸ φρονεῖν ἐγγίγνεται, οὕτως ἀναπαύηται, οἶσθ' ὅτι τῆς τ' ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ μάλιστα ἅπτεται καὶ ἥκιστα παράνομοι τότε αἱ ὄψεις φαντάζονται τῶν ἐνυπνίων.

individuals should most aspire to become and of the conditions that conduce to or militate against such an outcome.[27] It presupposes the ability of individuals to order their personalities and change their lives.

This emerges very clearly in the conclusion to the whole sequence (576b10–592b5), which ranks the lives in terms of their *eudaimonia*. Much of this operates at the level of the *psuchê* and its parts. 'Parts' suggests reification; but these parts are also agents:

> If, then, … a man is like the city, is it not necessary that he should have the same arrangement in him, i.e. that his *psuchê* should be full of much servility and lack of freedom, and those parts (*merê*) of it which are most decent should be slaves, and a small part, the most villainous and insane one, be master?[28]
>
> *Rep.* IX, 577d1–5

> And (to speak of the *psuchê* as a whole) the tyrannized *psuchê* will do what it wants least of all; constantly dragged by force by erotic frenzy (*oistros*) as it is, it will be full of disturbance and regret.[29]
>
> *Rep.* IX, 577d13–e2

> Are we to say with confidence that, as far as those desires that have to do with the profit-loving (*to philokerdes*) and the victory-loving (*to philonikon*) are concerned, those that follow knowledge (*epistêmê*) and reason (*logos*), pursue along with them those pleasures that intelligence (*to phronimon*) prescribes, and obtain those pleasures, will thereby obtain the truest pleasures …?[30]
>
> *Rep.* IX, 586d4–8

> Then when the whole *psuchê* follows the wisdom-loving (*to philosophon*) and there is no *stasis*, it is possible for each part (*meros*) to do its own and

27 This is emphasized by Kamtekar (2006), (2012).

28 εἰ οὖν … ὅμοιος ἀνὴρ τῇ πόλει, οὐ καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῳ ἀνάγκη τὴν αὐτὴν τάξιν ἐνεῖναι, καὶ πολλῆς μὲν δουλείας τε καὶ ἀνελευθερίας γέμειν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα αὐτῆς τὰ μέρη δουλεύειν, ἅπερ ἦν ἐπιεικέστατα, μικρὸν δὲ καὶ τὸ μοχθηρότατον καὶ μανικώτατον δεσπόζειν;

29 καὶ ἡ τυραννουμένη ἄρα ψυχὴ ἥκιστα ποιήσει ἃ ἂν βουληθῇ, ὡς περὶ ὅλης εἰπεῖν ψυχῆς· ὑπὸ δὲ οἴστρου ἀεὶ ἑλκομένη βίᾳ ταραχῆς καὶ μεταμελείας μεστὴ ἔσται.

30 θαρροῦντες λέγωμεν ὅτι καὶ περὶ τὸ φιλοκερδὲς καὶ τὸ φιλόνικον ὅσαι ἐπιθυμίαι εἰσίν, αἳ μὲν ἂν τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ λόγῳ ἑπόμεναι καὶ μετὰ τούτων τὰς ἡδονὰς διώκουσαι, ἃς ἂν τὸ φρόνιμον ἐξηγῆται, λαμβάνωσι, τὰς ἀληθεστάτας τε λήψονται …;

> especially to be just, and indeed for each to harvest its own pleasures, the ones that are best and, as far as possible, truest.[31]
>
> *Rep.* IX, 586e4–587a2

This conclusion to Books VIII–IX then becomes, at 588b1–592a4, the conclusion to the whole sequence from Books II to IX and the final answer to the challenge posed by Glaucon and Adimantus in Book II:[32] if we construct an *eikôn* of the *psuchê* as a triform creature, concealed in a shell with the outward appearance of a person, but consisting in fact of a person, a lion, and a many-headed beast (588b10–e2), we can think of justice and the realization of *eudaimonia* as a matter of strengthening 'the person inside' (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος, 589a8–9) and not the lion or the many-headed beast (588e4–589b6). Like the accounts of the deviant types, this is (clearly) a passage rich in imagery: the parts of the *psuchê* are personified, while the desires of the desiderative part are personified as beasts, and simultaneously reified as plants (589b1–3).[33] The life of the *psuchê* can be represented as the interaction of its three personified, agent-like elements (589a7–b6—the inner man tends the elements of the *psuchê*, so that they become friends; 589c8–d3—fine customs subject the bestial elements of our nature to the human, or rather to the divine, while base ones enslave the tame to the wild), but much more often the behaviour of the three personified *ideai* of the *eikôn*, or of the personified desires that they manifest, is the result of *our* behaviour as human agents (and of our interactions with other human agents): the claim that injustice is better for us than justice amounts to the claim that it is better for a person whose *psuchê* is of the kind depicted by the triform *eikôn* to feed up the multiform beast and the lion, and to starve the inner *anthrôpos* (588e4–589a1),[34] while the claim that justice is better amounts to saying that one must act and speak in such a way as

31 τῷ φιλοσόφῳ ἄρα ἑπομένης ἁπάσης τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μὴ στασιαζούσης ἑκάστῳ τῷ μέρει ὑπάρχει εἴς τε τἆλλα τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν καὶ δικαίῳ εἶναι, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἕκαστον καὶ τὰς βελτίστας καὶ εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν τὰς ἀληθεστάτας καρποῦσθαι.

32 See Petraki (2011) 233, 249–250.

33 'And he [the person inside] will tend the many-headed creature as a farmer does, nurturing and cultivating the tame and preventing the wild from growing' (καὶ τοῦ πολυκεφάλου θρέμματος ἐπιμελήσεται ὥσπερ γεωργός, τὰ μὲν ἥμερα τρέφων καὶ τιθασεύων, τὰ δὲ ἄγρια ἀποκωλύων φύεσθαι). Cf. Schofield (2006) 271.

34 λέγωμεν δὴ τῷ λέγοντι ὡς λυσιτελεῖ τούτῳ ἀδικεῖν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, δίκαια δὲ πράττειν οὐ συμφέρει, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο φησὶν ἢ λυσιτελεῖν αὐτῷ τὸ παντοδαπὸν θηρίον εὐωχοῦντι ποιεῖν ἰσχυρὸν καὶ τὸν λέοντα καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν λέοντα, τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον λιμοκτονεῖν καὶ ποιεῖν ἀσθενῆ.

to make the person inside the master of the other *ideai* (589a6–b1).[35] In these images it is the behaviour of the person as a whole—the real, flesh-and-blood, literal individual—that determines the behaviour of the agents who lurk hidden in the person's *psuchê*. Just so, it is the unjust *person* who enslaves the best (or most divine) part of himself to the worst (or most godless and vile, 589d6–590a1).[36] It is the habits of persons—licentiousness, obstinacy, irascibility, luxury, subservience, and manual labour—that determine the behaviour of the three inner agents that, in this *eikôn*, constitute the *psuchê* (590a6–c5).[37] The experiences of persons (such as punishment for one's crimes) affect the inter-relationship of these entities and thus determine the *phusis* and *hexis* of the *psuchê*, which are the results of psychic training in the same way as health and fitness are the results of physical training (591a10–b7). It is the attitudes of the person towards his (or her) own physical and psychic health, to the training of the intellect, and to external goods such as money and honour that will determine the harmony (*harmonia, sumphônia, suntaxis*) of mind and body (591c1–592a4). Thus (for example) a person with sense will live his (or her) life with the right *hexis* of the *psuchê* as his (or her) goal, honouring those forms of learning that produce a *psuchê* of the right sort (591c1–3),[38] and it is the task of the person as a whole to monitor 'the polity within himself', guarding against disturbing any of its elements and steering his attitudes towards material wealth as a captain steers a ship (591e1–4).[39]

The *eikôn* that brings Book 9 to a close, like some of the talk of the tripartite *psuchê* in Book 4, looks at first sight as if it is meant to distinguish two levels of explanation: (a) the everyday level of individual behaviour which is the *explanandum* or tenor; and (b) the behaviour of the personified elements

35 οὐκοῦν αὖ ὁ τὰ δίκαια λέγων λυσιτελεῖν φαίη ἂν δεῖν ταῦτα πράττειν καὶ ταῦτα λέγειν, ὅθεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος ἔσται ἐγκρατέστατος ...;

36 λαμβάνων τὸ χρυσίον ἅμα καταδουλοῦται τὸ βέλτιστον ἑαυτοῦ τῷ μοχθηροτάτῳ ... εἰ δὲ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ θειότατον ὑπὸ τῷ ἀθεωτάτῳ τε καὶ μιαρωτάτῳ δουλοῦται καὶ μηδὲν ἐλεεῖ, οὐκ ἄρα ἄθλιός ἐστι ...;

37 See e.g. 590b6–9: 'when one subjects that same thing, the *thumoeides*, to the mob-like beast and habituates it from youth to endure insults for the sake of money and the insatiability of the beast and so to become an ape instead of a lion' (ὅταν τις τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο, τὸ θυμοειδές, ὑπὸ τῷ ὀχλώδει θηρίῳ ποιῇ καὶ ἕνεκα χρημάτων καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἀπληστίας προπηλακιζόμενον ἐθίζῃ ἐκ νέου ἀντὶ λέοντος πίθηκον γίγνεσθαι).

38 οὐκοῦν ὅ γε νοῦν ἔχων πάντα τὰ αὑτοῦ εἰς τοῦτο συντείνας βιώσεται, πρῶτον μὲν τὰ μαθήματα τιμῶν, ἃ τοιαύτην αὐτοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπεργάσεται, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἀτιμάζων;

39 ἀλλ' ἀποβλέπων γε, εἶπον, πρὸς τὴν ἐν αὑτῷ πολιτείαν, καὶ φυλάττων μή τι παρακινῇ αὐτοῦ τῶν ἐκεῖ διὰ πλῆθος οὐσίας ἢ δι' ὀλιγότητα, οὕτως κυβερνῶν προσθήσει καὶ ἀναλώσει τῆς οὐσίας καθ' ὅσον ἂν οἷός τ' ᾖ.

(here *ideai*) of the *psuchê* that is the *explanans* or vehicle.[40] But in fact, here as elsewhere, there are more levels of explanation than these: throughout Books VIII and IX we have (a) literal accounts of the behaviour and interaction of actual human individuals; (b) metaphorical accounts of the behaviour of their *psuchai*; (c) metaphorical accounts of the behaviour of the three *eidê* of the *psuchê*; and (d) metaphorical accounts of the behaviour of the desires and opinions of the three psychic *eidê*, including the behaviour of the classes or factions formed by the desires of the *epithumêtikon*. A crucial point about this, however, is that at each of the metaphorical levels the agent whose behaviour the metaphors explain regularly intrudes; the imagery involves interaction between the vehicle (the personified parts and their desires) and the tenor (the actual person).[41] This is entirely natural, since the material for the construction of the vehicle is in fact drawn from the tenor—the behaviour of persons is explained *via* metaphors based on the behaviour of persons. Another way to think of this is in terms of vernacular *versus* philosophical models of the mind. The interaction of a person with his or her personified motives (I control my desires/my desires control me) is an ordinary metaphor that captures something of the everyday phenomenology of psychological experience. The personification of the three elements of the tripartite *psuchê*, on the other hand, certainly draws on earlier popular and poetic models, but is a specific Platonic elaboration. The intrusion of the tenor (the person, the *explanandum*) in that model, however, effects a rapprochement between the popular and the Platonic imagery.

The way that the model of the tripartite soul (the *eikôn* of the triform creature) is deployed indicates that Plato has no intention of replacing the person with the tripartite soul as the true level of explanation.[42] The intrusion of the person in the model is not 'occasional loose language', as Bobonich alleges.[43] Nor is it the case that the person's interaction with the personified parts of the soul really represents the interaction of *logos* with the other two parts, as Irwin alleges,[44] for the simple reason that the person regularly interacts with the

40 See Kahn (1987) 81 n. 8.

41 For interaction as a feature of poetic imagery, see Silk (1974), especially 138–149 on the phenomenon of 'intrusion' between vehicle and tenor.

42 Cf. Schofield (2006) 255–256.

43 Bobonich (2002) 234 and n. 27. Cf. Price (1995) 56, but contrast Ferrari (2007) 194. For interaction between the person and the (elements of) the tripartite model in Books other than VIII and IX, cf. IV, 443d9–444a2, 606a8–b1.

44 Irwin (1995) 285–287.

logistikon too.[45] Both in the way that the personified elements of the *psuchê*, of whatever sort, draw freely on the capacities of whole persons and in the way that the whole person interacts with the various personified elements of the personality, a robust and integrated notion of personal agency underpins Plato's account at all stages and at all levels. The only literal agent in all of this is the person.[46] It makes no sense at all to attempt to get behind Plato's imagery and ask what the *thumoeides* or the *epithumêtikon* can 'really' do; it is only in so far as they are personified that they can 'do' anything. The tripartite soul is irreducibly metaphorical.[47] The only purpose of this portrayal of the three elements of the *psuchê* as agents is to model the behaviour of persons. And

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45 See e.g. VIII, 553d1–2: the developing oligarchic type 'makes his *logistikon* and his *thumoeides* sit on the ground' (τὸ δέ γε … λογιστικόν τε καὶ θυμοειδὲς χαμαὶ … παρακαθίσας); IX, 571d8–9: anyone who wants to guard against illicit, bestial desires will (*inter alia*) 'keep his *logistikon* awake' (τὸ λογιστικὸν μὲν ἐγείρας ἑαυτοῦ); 588d5–589a1: telling a person that injustice is in his interests is tantamount to saying 'that it is to his advantage to feast and strengthen the multiform beast and the lion and everything to do with the lion, but starve and weaken the human being' (λυσιτελεῖν αὐτῷ τὸ παντοδαπὸν θηρίον εὐωχοῦντι ποιεῖν ἰσχυρὸν καὶ τὸν λέοντα καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν λέοντα, τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον λιμοκτονεῖν καὶ ποιεῖν ἀσθενῆ); 589a6–b1: the advocate of justice should say that one 'ought to act and speak in ways that will allow the person's inner person to exercise maximum control' (δεῖν ταῦτα πράττειν καὶ ταῦτα λέγειν, ὅθεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος ἔσται ἐγκρατέστατος); 589d7–e1, 589e3–590a1: there is no advantage in unjust acquisition of wealth if that means 'enslaving the best part of oneself to the most wicked' or 'the most divine to the most impious and vile' (καταδουλοῦται τὸ βέλτιστον ἑαυτοῦ τῷ μοχθηροτάτῳ … εἰ δὲ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ θειότατον ὑπὸ τῷ ἀθεωτάτῳ τε καὶ μιαρωτάτῳ δουλοῦται).

46 This is what Whiting (2012) 178 calls the 'deflationist' position: see e.g. Robinson (1971). Whiting herself argues that the deflationist position ('more or less') obtains in *some* passages of *Republic*, the 'realist' position (of Bobonich et al.) 'more or less' in others: see esp. (2012) 202–203. This, I think, fails to do justice to the role of metaphor, as I discuss it in this paper and in Cairns (2014), despite her emphasis on 'the metaphors and images that frame the arguments', 'the models or metaphors around which Plato chose to *organize* the *Republic*' (2012: 206–207). On my interpretation, Plato would have had no difficulty in signing up to Aristotle's view that the proper agent of psychic functions is not the *psuchê* but the person: βέλτιον γὰρ ἴσως μὴ λέγειν τὴν ψυχὴν ἐλεεῖν ἢ μανθάνειν ἢ διανοεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῇ ψυχῇ (*DA* 1.4, 408b13–15).

47 I thank Alex Long for alerting me to the fact that Malcolm Schofield has made this point clearly and succinctly: 'I conclude that Plato … has *no* non-metaphorical way of articulating his theory of mind' (2008: 280 n. 48). Ferrari (2003) focuses mainly on the metaphorical status of the *Republic*'s analogy between types of city and types of people, but his insistence on metaphor holds good also for the presentation of the *eidê* of the soul. See also Renaut, this volume.

as Books VIII–IX (and especially the concluding pages of Book IX) show, the purpose of modelling the behaviour of persons in this way is so that persons can understand their behaviour and *change it*. Rather than 'occasional loose language', the imagery of the person's interaction with the personified *eidê* of the soul represents what *we* are supposed to do—i.e. use the imagery to understand our motivations, and cultivate those that will make us most virtuous and best off. The interaction between the source domain of actual personal agency and the metaphorical agency of the *eidê* that is a recurrent feature of the model itself serves an important argumentative purpose.

In the dim and distant pre-Homeric past of Greek language and thought, *psuchê* probably had a literal sense (as the cold breath that is expelled on death);[48] but already in Homer it is reified as something to be preserved, lost, removed, or won, and personified as a creature that leaves the body on death and a simulacrum that survives in Hades.[49] Plato no doubt believes in the existence of the *psuchê*—it is one of the central conceptual metaphors of his thought. But this does not make the entity in which he believes any less metaphorical.[50] The *psuchê* is not the sort of concept to which it makes sense to apply the notion of literal truth. Its existence requires the kind of ontological metaphor that makes it an object or an agent. No matter how committed a believer may be to the reality of its existence, there is nothing that such a person can say about it that does not involve a transfer of qualities from other domains of experience. As a hypothetical aspect of a living creature, anything that it does is an aspect of what the living creature does. If this should include the capacity to exhibit beliefs, emotions, and desires, that capacity will depend

48 See Clarke (1999) 144–147.

49 See Cairns (2014).

50 One occasionally finds the objection that expressions that constitute the conventional, main, or only way of referring to a concept, or that express concepts to which the speaker is committed, cannot be metaphorical (e.g. Pelliccia (1995) 34–35, Hogan (2002)). But some concepts (or some aspects of some concepts) are inherently or irreducibly metaphorical: see Lakoff and Turner (1989), especially their refutation of the standard objections to this position at 110–135; cf. Lakoff and Johnson (1999), e.g. their discussion of time at 137–169, with Casasanto and Boroditsky (2008). Even Plato's conviction that the *psuchê* is immortal involves an ontological metaphor that turns a hypothetical aspect or function of actual living beings into a special kind of living entity. There may, however, be a useful distinction to be drawn between the background, conceptual metaphor that there is an object or agent within us called the *psuchê* and the deliberate, protreptic use of metaphor that characterizes the extravagantly developed imagery of *Republic* VIII and IX. On deliberate *versus* non-deliberate metaphor (as a distinction between types of metaphor, not between metaphor and literal language), see Steen (2008).

upon mappings that proceed from the empirical concept of the person to the construct that is the soul. No amount of commitment or conviction can make that construct anything other than a metaphor—a matter of imagery. Equally, if the parts of the *psuchê* are not, as a matter of empirical fact, persons, then their presentation as such depends on the mapping onto the domain of the *psuchê* of characteristics that properly belong to actual persons. Whatever Plato thinks about the soul's existence *per se*, he is clearly aware that his model of the *psuchê* as a composite of more than one personified agent is a metaphor, because its role in his argument culminates in the presentation of the tripartite soul as an *eikôn* at the end of Book IX. An *eikôn*, to borrow a formulation used in the *Phaedrus*, is not an account of what a thing is, but merely of what it is like (*eoike*).[51] It is not true, but merely likely or plausible (*eikôs*). *Eikones* can be useful: hence the use of the *eikôn* of the triform creature at the conclusion of an argument to which the *eikôn* of the tripartite soul has been central. But images can also be dangerous and must be approached with caution; this is one reason why the protreptic use of the *eikôn* at the conclusion of the argument in Book IX (an account that draws heavily on popular and poetic metaphors) is immediately followed by a series of warnings about the dangers of poetic images (in this case, with a significant variation in terminology, called *eidôla*) in Book X.[52]

51 See *Phdr.* 246a3–6 (to describe what sort of thing *psuchê* is would need a long and divinely inspired account; to say what it is like, ἔοικε, *via* the following image of a team of two horses and a charioteer, is an easier and more human task); cf. 265b6–c2 (the myth's imagery—ἀπεικάζοντες—will have caught the truth in some respects and missed the mark in others, but is perhaps not entirely implausible); see Moore (this volume) 98. Plato regularly hedges his myths, models, and images in similar ways. See *L.* 644b9–c2 (where the model of the human being as puppet that follows is hedged as an *eikôn*). In the *Timaeus*, it is the whole discussion that is hedged (as an εἰκὼς μῦθος of a cosmos that is itself an *eikôn*, 29b1–d3; cf. van Riel, this volume, 14–115, Bryan (2012) 114–191). For the general point, cf. *Phd.* 114d1–7 (the preceding myth of the *psuchê*'s journey after death is not the kind of thing whose truth a sensible man would insist on, but it is worth the risk of believing this or something like it). For wider discussion of Plato's use of *eikones* (including myths), see (as well as my fellow contributors to this volume) Pender (2000) 37–86, (2003); Allen (2010); Petraki (2011) *passim*, esp. 58–105; on Plato's myths more generally, orientation may be had from the recent collection by Collobert, Destrée, and Gonzalez (2012).

52 On the potential ironies of this, see Halliwell (2002) 55–56, with further literature in Petraki (2011) 37 n. 1. On philosophical and poetic image-making in *Rep.* (and on the terminology employed), see Naddaff (2002) 66–91 (esp. 80–81), Allen (2010) 29–30, 40–59, 62, 64–68, 148–150, 156–157; Petraki (2011) *passim*, esp. 20–23, 80–84, 87–90, 131–136,

This might suggest that (in terms of the categories deployed in Pender) the metaphors of the tripartite soul are 'illustrative' rather than 'epistemic'.[53] But while Plato is typically careful to hedge his myths and metaphors of *psuchê* as 'likely' rather than true, and though he often hints that a true—perhaps even literal—account of the soul's nature is theoretically possible, that account is not to be found anywhere in his extant writings. Though the accounts that we do get are typically flagged as mere approximations to the truth, adequate for the contexts and arguments in which they occur, they are all we ever get. In that sense, they are neither purely illustrative nor straightforwardly epistemic; in heuristic terms, they seem to be the former in theory, but the latter in practice. As such, they constitute a pervasive and particularly important example of Plato's appreciation of the power of images.

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182–266. On the complexity of the relation between Platonic philosophizing and poetry more generally see Crotty (2009); see also the essays in Destrée and Herrmann (2011). For further exploration of the relation between Books IX and X, see Ford (this volume).

53 Pender (2000) 18–27; cf. (in substance) Petraki (2011) 98.

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